The Venture of Islam
To consider mankind otherwise than brethren, to think favours are peculiar to one nation and exclude others, plainly supposes a darkness in the understanding.

—John Woolman
To John U. Nef
and to the memory of
Gustave E. von Grunebaum
in admiration and gratitude

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Marshall Goodwin Simms Hodgson died suddenly on June 10, 1968, in his forty-seventh year, before he had finished this and other works. At the time of his death the manuscript for the first four of the six books of *The Venture of Islam* had been submitted to a publisher as final (although minor editing and footnote attribution still remained to be done); he had reworked much of Book Five; and he had indicated revisions wanted in Book Six. Many of the charts and diagrams were only sketches, and there were only general descriptions of the intended maps. A much shorter version of the work, resembling *The Venture of Islam* in its general form, had existed for a number of years, used and sought after by graduate and undergraduate students alike. It had started as a brief outline, some chapters consisting of only two or three pages or not yet even written. He constantly wrote, withdrew what he had written, rewrote, and sought criticism from his colleagues near and far. He was simultaneously at work on a world history, and he often remarked that he hoped readers would some day have both available, for he had long been convinced that any historical development could only be understood in terms of the historical whole, and that whole included the entire canvas of human history. Although several hundred pages of manuscript for his world history exist, most unfortunately it apparently cannot be published, for to put it in meaningful form would mean that it was no longer his work. A number of the world history’s basic assumptions and points of view can be found in *The Venture of Islam*, however, particularly in the various sections of the ‘Introduction to the Study of Islamic Civilization’, originally planned by Hodgson as appendices to the entire work. He was an indefatigable and fastidious worker, with definite ideas of his own. Although continually seeking advice from everywhere, he was yet adamant that no publisher’s editor would alter his text.

It was with considerable trepidation that I agreed to see this work through the press after his death. I had worked with him, even sharing his office for a time, and had taken over the course in the history of Islamic civilization at the University of Chicago, a course that he had created and that we had for two years jointly taught. *The Venture of Islam* had originated to meet the needs of that course; but concurrently Hodgson recognized that much he had to say went far beyond any ordinary text. He always hoped the book would appeal to the educated layman as well as to the specialist and the beginning student; he thought he could reach all three in the one work, and it was thus that he wrote.
He kept voluminous notes, and he had written out for himself many directions; there were numerous complete charts as well as sketches and designs for others. The same was true for illustrations, which unfortunately because of cost have had to be eliminated. I saw my task to be as light-handed as possible, and to preserve the manuscript as completely his. Therefore, there is a more detailed text, and there are more charts and maps for the first two-thirds of the work than for the last third. His writing style, particularly, is unaltered; there were places in the manuscript where he had deliberately changed to a greater complexity from an earlier, less detailed style. Always his aim was to pack as much meaning as possible into a sentence or a paragraph, while keeping it so circumscribed as to include only what he wanted. Some of his neologisms may not be attractive; more than most other writers, however, he has made his readers aware of the traps one may fall into when giving a word or concept familiar in one culture an apparently similar connotation in the context of another culture. His world history would have had central to it such concerns. I followed his notes where I could. Since he opted for different spellings and even in some cases different terminology later in his writing, I have tried to bring some consistency there. In a few instances he altered traditional dates to other, less usual chronology; these dates I have left. Only where a few notes in brackets are found in Book Six has my presence intruded. I hope and believe the work is his, purely and directly, and that I have done nothing to alter it.

No one who was associated with Marshall Hodgson remained unmoved by who he was and the scholarship he stood for. He was a lesser-known giant among better-known scholars. His Quaker background provided him with a quiet gentleness backed by absolute resolution when necessary; perhaps more than for most teachers, the kind of person he was informed the classes he taught, especially those in Qur’ān and Sūfism. No narrow specialist, he found in his work with the intellectually wide-ranging Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago a satisfaction rivaling that afforded by his Islamic study and teaching.

It is impossible here to make the acknowledgments he would have made if he were alive. Leading Islamic scholars throughout the world read portions of his work. He was able to take few leaves from his teaching and his administrative duties to devote entirely to research; but one or two precious opportunities did occur. Help also came from friends, and especially his students. I would like to acknowledge simply by name help graciously and eagerly offered me by his colleagues and students: Professors William H. McNeill, Muhsin Mahdi, and the late Gustave von Grunebaum for valuable counsel; graduate students Harold Rogers, Marilyn Robinson Waldman, William Ochserwald, and George Chadwick, now all launched on careers of their own; and many others too numerous to mention.

Most of all, the countless hours Marshall Hodgson’s wife, Phyllis, devoted
to the whole work over the years under the most trying of circumstances cannot be left unacknowledged. Her example, as his, remains for the rest of us a monument.

Reuben W. Smith

Callison College
University of the Pacific
Reuben Smith’s account of his own contribution to the posthumous realization of Marshall Hodgson’s monumental work is far too modest. Over a period of at least four years he gave uncounted hours, which he might otherwise have spent on his own research and writing, to the difficult task of finishing his colleague’s work. For this selfless devotion, and for his never-failing good humor in answering countless questions, the University of Chicago Press wishes to thank Mr. Smith on behalf of all students and other readers of these volumes.

When the University of Chicago Press acquired *The Venture of Islam* from a commercial publisher, all the text had been set in type by Unwin Brothers Limited in England and galleys had been proofread by Mr. Smith. Decisions remained to be made concerning the charts and the maps. After consultation with Mr. Smith, the Press decided to include all the charts originally planned by Marshall Hodgson except a very few incomplete or peripheral ones. The titles of the charts are Hodgson’s, as are the concepts and the contents, as nearly as we could reproduce them.

A tentative list of map titles had been drawn up by Smith from Hodgson’s notes and references in the text. Using this list and drawing on his wide knowledge of the field as well as his understanding of Hodgson’s aims and point of view, John E. Woods, of the Department of History of the University of Chicago and currently one of the professors teaching the course in Islamic civilization, drafted all the maps included in these volumes. From his drafts, the Cartographic Division of the University of Wisconsin provided the final versions.

The indexes to all three volumes were compiled by Yusuf I. Ghaznavi, graduate student at the University of Chicago, with the assistance of his wife, Huricihan, a former student of Hodgson. Mr. Ghaznavi also adapted Hodgson’s original Glossary to the three-volume format so that the user of each volume would have definitions of the unfamiliar words at hand.

The decision to make these volumes available singly as well as in a set necessitated a few changes from Hodgson’s original plan. In a series of ‘Appendices’ Hodgson had set forth his views on the meaning of Islamic terms, transliteration, personal names, dates, historical method, and other important aspects of his work. Since familiarity with this material enhances the reader’s understanding of the entire work, we decided to move it all to the beginning of Volume I, changing only the title, from ‘Appendices’ to ‘Introduction to the Study of Islamic Civilization’. Cross references in the text to the ‘Appendices’ have (we hope all of them) been changed to refer to the Introduction. Hodgson conveniently arranged his ‘Selective Biblio-
graphy for Further Reading’ in chronological sections that enabled us to divide it into the three relevant parts, and accordingly, each volume has its own ‘Selective Bibliography’. General works are all listed in Volume I. The question of the Glossary was more difficult. Convenience of the reader again indicated the desirability of a glossary in each volume, even though many words would appear in all three. Finally, while Hodgson supplied titles for each of his six ‘books’ and for the work as a whole, he did not envisage its being divided into three volumes; from terminology he used elsewhere, we have provided titles for the separate volumes.

The University of Chicago Press is pleased to be able to bring *The Venture of Islam* to the many students and friends who have long awaited its publication and regrets only that Marshall Hodgson himself is no longer here to share that pleasure.
The Venture of Islam
Introduction to the Study of Islamic Civilization

On making sense of Islamicate words, names, and dates

The thoughts of a people distant in time or space cannot be at all deeply shared without our becoming acquainted with things and ideas important to them but of which we have had no exact equivalent. As far as possible, one wants to read the works themselves in which the thoughts have been expressed; in these, even in translation, the special concepts and categories of the writers, as well as the personalities and places referred to, must be reproduced (if the translation is serious) in forms alien to the usual flow of English, no matter how much the resources of English may have been adapted or even twisted to do duty for what remain alien conceptions.

The same is, in some degree, true of any work treating of the alien civilization. The serious reader must be prepared to think in novel ways. To this end, he must be prepared to absorb as readily as possible a whole range of new concepts and terms. Otherwise he cannot expect to profit seriously by a study of the culture; at most he will receive an impression of exotic quaintness, romance, or incongruity which does no justice to the human reality.

Though Islamicate culture has been expressed in many languages essentially unrelated to each other, much terminology and customary practice has been common to them all. For instance, technical terms in religion and also in some other fields have commonly been derived from the Arabic or in some cases from the Persian, as have been Western terms from Latin and Greek. Just as is the case with Christian names, Muslim names form to a large degree a common stock that reappears substantially the same in every Muslim country. The manners of dating an event or of heading a letter tend to be constant, and of course the use of Arabic script. It is important to feel as much at ease as possible with all this.

The problem is complicated by the fact that in many cases writers about Islandom as well as translators have been very inconsistent in their renderings of names and concepts. The reader will find the same term presented in many utterly different guises. The various sections of this Introduction give a number of aids for negotiating the resultant maze. Ways of transliterating from various Islamicate languages are outlined, with suggestions of how the reader can refer from one system to another if he reads different authors; Muslim personal names are grouped into common types, with suggestions for keeping them apart; the Muslim calendar is explained; short essays are offered on problems of studying a civilization; recurrent technical terms are briefly defined. Leaving most detail to the following special sections, I believe it necessary at this point to emphasize reasons for using exact
transliteration, and to offer some suggestions of how the systems used in this work may at the same time assist approximate pronunciation.

Why transliteration?

Transliteration is the rendering of the spelling of a word from the script of one language into that of another, in this case from the 'Arabic' alphabets used in Islamicate languages into the 'Latin' alphabet used in English. Transcription is the rendering of the sound of a word so that a reader can pronounce it. Ideally, transliteration should include as much transcription as possible. When an original script is unfamiliar, transliteration is necessary first of all in the case of names, which by their nature cannot be translated and yet must be clearly recognizable and distinguishable from any names like them; and secondly in the case of technical terms, when the concept they represent is not present in another language and it is important to refer to it with precision.

In this second case of technical terms there is room for difference in the degree to which transliteration is used as compared with a rough translation. Different writers draw the line at different points. A word that some will transliterate, others will try to translate by more or less equivalent English words, either because they attach less importance to precision in that given case, or because they hope to attach a technical meaning to a special English word or pair of words. Thus the concept expressed in all Islamicate languages as شرعية is not present in English. If it is translated as 'law' the reader is misled, because it covers much that we do not call 'law' and fails to cover much that we do call 'law'. Even if we use a compound term (as is often advisable), 'Sacred Law', the reader will be misled unless he is given a full explanation that this is something quite different from what the term 'sacred law' might ordinarily lead him to expect. In The Venture of Islam the concept here being referred to has a special importance; hence for exactness it is rendered, according to its sound in Arabic, by the transliteration (which is also a close transcription), شريعة, and it is explained in detail. The like is done with a number of other important terms that occur frequently. In this way, so far as a term carries any meaning at all, it will be that assigned it in the explanation and not one derived from overtones attaching to previously known English terms. In addition, it is unmistakable which original term is referred to; whereas arbitrary translations, varying according to the writer, often leave the careful reader in doubt.

If a system of transliteration used for names and for terms is consistent and exact it saves everyone much time and effort in the long run. Above all, any system must be reversible; that is, such that the original written symbols (which are far more constant than the pronunciation) can be reconstructed with certainty from the transliteration. Second, it should so far as possible at the same time be a transcription, such that the careful
reader will pronounce the word more or less recognizably in oral communication. Finally, it should require as few diacritics as possible so that, if they are omitted, confusion will be held to a minimum; the diacritics that are used should be common ones, available on the average academic or professional copyist’s typewriter.

Diacritics are, however, necessary. Since letters of one language usually have no exact equivalent in the alphabet of another language, the choice of English letters to render Arabic or Persian letters must be rather arbitrary. Some alien letters can be rendered more or less happily by existing English letters: for instance the Arabic \( \text{不忘} \) sounds not unlike the English T. The sound of others is unlike any sound in English; but they are usually in the same phonetic category with some other sound, just as the G in gave is related to the C in cave. For such we can sometimes use digraphs, like TH for the Greek \( \Theta \); but sometimes we must invent a new English letter that is rather like an existing English letter of related sound. Thus for the Arabic \( \text{لا} \) we invent arbitrarily a new letter \( T \), because to the native speaker of English that Arabic letter is rather like T in sound. It must be noted that T and \( T \) are quite as distinct from each other as C and G (in fact, G was originally formed in the same way, simply by adding a stroke to C). The added part—a dot, a stroke, or whatever—of the new letter is the diacritical mark, and is sometimes omitted in printing (just as in certain Latin inscriptions both G and C are written as C, without the stroke). But properly speaking, the diacritical mark is not something extra, to be omitted at will; it is an essential part of a new letter.

It might seem as if exact reconstruction of the original were of importance only to the scholar who knows the original language. In fact, it is of importance to the ordinary reader also. He needs to know whether the sharia he comes across in one writer is the same concept as the shareeah he finds in another writer (it is); or whether Hassan and Hasan are likely to be one man or two. (Hassân and Hasan are two quite different names; but newsmen, who have no exact system, often write them both ‘Hassan’.) That otherwise educated persons seem to be helpless in the face of exact transliteration and fail to profit by it does not show that on this point human nature is perverse but only that Western education is remiss. The only way that this can begin to be remedied is for scholars to set a good example and form better habits in their readers.

It is sometimes said that specialists do not need exact transliteration and non-specialists cannot use it. This is not so. Outside of a very narrow subspecialty in which he has full first-hand acquaintance, even the Arabist or Persianist will come across names first in secondary works, commonly in a Western language; yet he will want to know the original. Without diacritics he cannot distinguish ‘\( \text{علي} \)’ from ‘\( \text{ال} \), Ḥākim from Ḥākim, zāhir from zāhir, ‘\( \text{عمر} \)’ from Amber. To assume that the non-specialist can have no use for exact transliteration suggests condescension; for it implies that he will read only the one book on the subject, and so have no occasion to refer across from the usage of one book to that of another, nor need to straighten out the names he comes across.
If all writers used a single consistent system, the problem of identifying transliterated names would be much reduced. If that is impossible, then if each author's system is at least exact, and he explains it (as careful authors do) in a note or in his preface, a reference to the prefaces of the two works will usually tell the reader whether or not one spelling is the equivalent of the other.

Strictly speaking, it might be enough if the writer put the exact forms only in the index, to avoid the cost of diacritics in the text. But this sacrifices the advantage of accustoming the eye to the correct form rather than an ambiguous one, as well as being a nuisance to that reader who wants to read a passage uninterruptedly and yet be sure of references as he goes along. Since careful writers now spell 'Cézanne', 'Tübingen', 'Saint-Saëns', 'Charlotte Brontë', 'façade', 'Provençal', 'Potémkin', Arabic and Persian words should also be spelled with diacritics. The careless reader should not begrudge the careful one such precision. Nevertheless, in those cases where a well-known name has already achieved a uniform rendering in English, it is generally regarded as unnecessary to include it in the system of transliteration since common Anglicized forms such as Cairo or Damascus—like Naples or Quebec—are unambiguous. This is especially appropriate where the most frequent context of the term in English will be other than special discussions of Islamicate materials: in other words, situations that do not require special new thought habits. A rough rule is that common English usage should be retained when a term refers to something easily recognized and presently existing, such as a great city. (To allow for Anglicized accentuation, diacritics may sometimes be dropped when an English termination is added to words so common that they have already shown the exact spelling in the simple form.)

It is worth noting that non-technical, 'popular' forms are subject to a steady erosion, however much uniformity they may have achieved. Specialists will tend to use the technical transliteration, first in special monographs and then by habit in their general works. Once a majority of the specialists are using the technical transliteration in general works, the rest tend to follow; and one generation later, the non-specialists are likely to follow the usage of the specialists. Thus the name of the Prophet was once, for non-specialists, usually Mahomet; this was almost universally replaced among non-specialists by what used to be the technical transliteration of the specialists, Mohammed; but meanwhile, a more sophisticated technical transliteration had supervened among the specialists, Muḥammad; now this (shorn of its diacritic) is beginning to replace the older form also among non-specialists.

For those who would like to maximize continuity in the English literary tradition, it is hard to know where to try to stem the tide. Once the technical form has become the more common among specialists—e.g., Qurʾān for Koran—it is probably too late. Very few terms regarding the past seem destined to retain a non-technical form, perhaps only those prominent in European history and where the technical form requires a major shift in pronunciation and not just in spelling (Ottoman for Osmanî, Calîph for Khâlâfah). Current geographical terms, on the other hand, have a better chance despite the tendency of some cartographers to put all names into native form, even Roma and Napoli.
Some general suggestions for pronunciation

Transliteration is required in this work chiefly from four languages, Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Urdu, each of which has used a form of what was originally the Arabic alphabet. Of these, Arabic words will most often be met because, for the sake of uniformity, technical terms (whatever the linguistic context) will be rendered only in a single form, that of their original language, which is most often Arabic.

The letters used in this book for transliterating Arabic and Persian can be pronounced recognizably enough by a beginner if he renders the vowels as in Italian (a = ah, e as in bet, i = ee, o = oh, u = oo), and the consonants in the commonest English way. Long vowels (ā, ī, ū) should be held extra long, and may receive the stress. The consonants must be pronounced unvaryingly; thus s is always hissed, and h is always pronounced, even in words like Mahdī or Allāh (but not in digraphs like th, sh, ch pronounced as in English). Beginners may pronounce the dotted or lined letters like the undotted ones, but must keep them separate in the mind or similar names may be confused. Aw is like ou in house; dh is th in then; (hamzah) and (‘ayn) are consonants which are not always distinguishable to the Anglophone ear and can be overlooked in pronouncing.

The same rules of thumb may also be used for the other languages, except for Urdu (and Indo-Persian), where a short a is like u in but; and a combination of h with a consonant often is not a digraph but must be pronounced as an aspirate; that is, th is not pronounced as in nothing, but somewhat as in at home; and dh somewhat as in ad hominem. Ottoman Turkish names may be treated like the Persian except that Ă and ĕ are pronounced as in German (French eu and u). Modern republican Turkish has a Latin alphabet of its own, several letters of which must be learned ad hoc (see the section following); but apart from these, the usual system will serve—vowels as in Italian, consonants as in English. The same guide will serve at least roughly for any other foreign names to be encountered.

It is wise for the beginner to use no stress at all, but to pronounce each syllable with equal fullness (unless he knows that a given syllable is to be stressed).

Certain Muslim names are often spelled in English in two portions, which are, however, essentially inseparable. Beginners (and journalists) often drop the first portion, treating the latter portion as a 'last name' to be used alone. This is like referring to MacArthur as 'Arthur'. Abū-Yazīd, for instance, is a quite different figure from Yazīd, Ibn-Sa'd from Sa'd, and 'Abd-al-Malik from Mālik. (Still worse than calling 'Abd-al-Malik 'Malik' is the complementary error of treating the ' 'Abd-al-' as if it were an independent 'first name': forms like 'Abdul', 'Abul', or 'Ibnul' when thought of as separable names are barbarisms that are not even formed in the original script, let alone actually used.) In this work such compound names will be hyphenated;
but many writers separate them without even a hyphen, and the beginner may well learn to restore the hyphen mentally, to avoid endless confusion.

**TRANSLITERATION**

Transliteration from Islamicate languages, especially from Arabic, has been increasingly uniform in scholarly works in English. Yet even now writers differ; books written in the last century and the beginning of this century show a great variety of systems (and lack of system). A serious reader who goes beyond one or two books must gradually become used to the chief older variations as well as the the main modern systems.  

As suggested in the preceding section of this Introduction, there are three practical requirements in transliteration: *written reversibility*, that is, one should be able to reconstruct the original written form from the transliterated form; *oral recognizability*, that is, the reader's pronunciation should be well enough guided to allow oral recognition by someone who pronounces properly; and *resistance to accident*, that is, if diacritics are changed or lost, either by chance or for economy, confusion should remain minimal. To fill all three requirements, there must be a separate system from each language into each language. Arabic and Persian, for instance, not only pronounce the same letters very differently, but they are two different languages. Hence they require not just distinguishing transcriptions but separate transliterations. Some scholars interested only in written reversibility have tried to use a single system for transliteration into all languages using Latin script.

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3 Detailed differences in transliteration continue to be multiplied. For instance, Cowan, in editing the translation of Hans Wehr's *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, as late as 1961 introduced two new symbols. Variations are often not accompanied by a justification, and they may only increase the general problem. By retaining, for extraneous reasons, the old dj and k, the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* lost an opportunity to provide a final settlement of transliteration of Arabic, at least, into English.

4 Once there was an attempt to transliterate all Semitic alphabets by one system (Wellhausen); this included Arabic and by extension Persian, Turkish, etc. Then an attempt was made to transliterate uniformly all languages using the Arabic alphabet. In addition to the difficulty of maintaining some semblance of transcription for the other Islamicate languages, such as Persian, 'uniform transliteration' founded on the fact that Urdu (Hindustani) was written in two alphabets (which were thus handled differently); and either the Islamicist's way of writing Urdu had to look too clumsy in comparison with the alternative, or his way of writing Arabic had to be so denatured as not to stand comparison with the transliterations for other Semitic languages. But there is an even more serious dimension when an alphabet-to-alphabet system instead of a language-to-language system is pressed. If Persian or Turkish is felt as a language in its own right, a 'uniform transliteration' point of view can become offensive, because not only pronunciation but certain syntactical practices of Persian, for example, are made to seem merely an 'exception' to the rules for Arabic. In a general work, such a misapprehension must be avoided. Uniform transliteration implies more concern with philology than with lay intelligibility. The philologist can easily learn to convert from the system of one language to that of another, while the layman needs assistance barely to pronounce.
The problem is, the same Latin-script letter can have a very different value in English, for example, from its value in French. Though scholars could work with some international system of transliteration, the lay reader would find it quite difficult, and it seems useful to have separate transliteration systems for the widely used languages, systems that incorporate as many elements of transcription as possible. Scholars can learn the French or German transliteration systems, say, in the same way they learn any other novelty in French or German. And the lay reader will be encouraged to continue his reading.

A careful writer will generally list the letters he uses for transliteration in the regular order of the Arabic (or Persian, etc.) alphabet or else refer to some other publications he follows where such a list is to be found. To correlate a term in one work with that in another, the reader will need to refer the letters back to the respective lists; from their position there he can tell whether they form the same term or a different one. The regular order is used in the following tables, with the preferable transliterations indicated and some alternatives added.

Transliteration from Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inter-English national of Islam</th>
<th>Encyclopaedia Approximate 'Literary' Pronunciation</th>
<th>Alternatives Sometimes Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>English b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>like English t</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>th</td>
<td>English th in thin</td>
<td>t; ts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>English j</td>
<td>g (in Egypt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḥ</td>
<td>pharyngeal h ('guttural')</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kh</td>
<td>German and Scots ch, Spanish j (nearer h than k)</td>
<td>x; k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>like English d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dh</td>
<td>English th in this</td>
<td>d; ds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>rolled (trilled) r</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>English z</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>hissed s (in this)</td>
<td>ss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sh</td>
<td>English sh</td>
<td>sch; ch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>š</td>
<td>velar s ('emphatic')</td>
<td>ss; s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ž</td>
<td>velar d ('emphatic')</td>
<td>dh; d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ı</td>
<td>velar t ('emphatic')</td>
<td>th; t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>icaid</td>
<td>velar z ('emphatic')</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḡ</td>
<td>glottal scrape; to Anglophones difficult to pronounce; sometimes omitted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English national of Islam</td>
<td>Inter-Encyclopaedia Approximate ‘Literary’ Pronunciation</td>
<td>Alternatives Sometimes Used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gh</td>
<td>voiced equivalent of kh g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>English f</td>
<td>ph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q</td>
<td>uvular k (‘guttural’) c; k</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>English k</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>English l (in live)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>English m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>English n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>English h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>English w</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>English y (as consonant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>short a as in cat or ask e (according to position)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>short i as in bit e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>short u as in full o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>â</td>
<td>long a as in father; sometimes as in fat (but held long)</td>
<td>au, o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ì</td>
<td>long i as in machine ee (but held long)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>û</td>
<td>long u as in rule oo, ou (but held long)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aw</td>
<td>English ow in how ow, ou</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ay</td>
<td>English ai in aisle (or in ail) ey, ei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The transliteration in the table marked ‘English’ is that usually used in English-language scholarly publications. In this system some digraphs are...
used (e.g., th or sh). In some publications such digraphs are joined by a bar placed below the pair; when the bar is not used, the rare cases where the two signs do not form a digraph are indicated by separating them, for instance, with an apostrophe. (Thus t'h would indicate the pronunciation of at home.) The most important deviation from these letters still found in English scholarly works reflects the dislike of digraphs by some purists, who replace them with the letters listed as ‘international’ because they are widely used in Europe. The Encyclopaedia of Islam, edited in more than one language, has perpetuated a further complication for the two ‘English’ choices of j and q. In older works and in journalistic writing the variations in transliteration are numerous and often based on French phonetic patterns even though appearing in English language works. The scholarly systems of other Western languages tend to be similar to the English except for characteristic variations in the case of digraphs; e.g., English sh is French ch or German sch; English j is French dj or German dsch.

In addition to the regular consonants, which in the Arabic script appear uniformly, and the vowels, several other peculiarities of Arabic spelling must be rendered. Here variations arise from the nature of Arabic writing. The usual Arabic form as it is written gives less than is needed for sure identification of a term; for instance it leaves out most ‘short’ vowels which all transliteration systems supply. Moreover, transliteration with too great attention to transcription may confuse the non-specialist reader as to actual word elements. Any system must admittedly be a compromise, but it seems better to emphasize the element of reversibility.

The most important points of scholarly compromise are two. One Arabic consonant is not included in the order of the Arabic alphabet, a certain h marked like a t, sometimes pronounced h and sometimes t. It occurs only after an a at the end of a word. In this work it is rendered h after short a, t after long å; by many it is omitted at least after short a or rendered by t before the article of a following word. Thus for our Kufah, some write Kufa. The stress the long pronunciation, and to bring out root letters in the latter two cases; a nuance of Arabic spelling which distinguishes between ú and a hypothetically different yw is irrelevant to the needs of transliteration. But I follow usual practice.

Some philologians find a digraph unsound pedagogically. Despite added expense and the diminished oral recognizability and resistance to accident, they prefer to multiply diacritics. If persuaded to use digraphs at all, some will use a ligature to make the digraph artificially a single unit. But typing a ligature when one is also underlining for italics presents difficulties; moreover, the apostrophe should still be used when the letters do not form a digraph (such as s’h), to warn the interested but unpracticed lay reader that normal English pronunciation does not hold.

In this case, consistent clarity would call for a preceding diacritically marked vowel, preferably a specially marked a, but such a letter has not been adopted. The use of -ah is better than plain -a because it avoids confusion with -â or -â when the diacritics are dropped (for instance, distinguishing Hirah from Hirâ’), a confusion far more likely than that with an -ah where the h is radical. It also avoids confusion with the -a of grammatical endings when a whole phrase is transliterated and the endings included. The use of -ât is a concession to widespread pronunciation habits, and overlaps no more than would -âh.
second compromise is that the Arabic article al- is in certain cases 'assimilated' to the noun that follows, the l being pronounced like the initial letter of the noun. Writers attempting to preserve a closer transcription render the article ar- or as- before r or s, etc., so as to assure a more exact pronunciation; but many writers, and this work follows such a system, render the article with an l, however it is pronounced, because in this case mispronunciation will cause little confusion and the l identifies the article for the layman (and also answers to the Arabic script form the librarian must learn to recognize). Thus I write al-Shafi'i, not ash-Shafi'i, which is yet how it is pronounced.

Minor points that call for notice are the following. Some final vowels written long in Arabic but pronounced short are here transliterated as long, but some writers make them short. In the case of a final -a written with a -y in Arabic, I distinguish it as -ā, while some write it as an ordinary long -ā. Consistently with the ordinary rules for vowels and consonants, I write certain forms -iyy- and -uww-; but some make these -iy-, -uw-. An exception is usually made for the ending which by normal rules would be -iy; here I write -i, to conform with Persian, Turkish, and Urdu, as well as the Arabic vernaculars, in all which the same ending occurs; thus I write al-Bukhari, not al-Bukhariyy. But a few writers make it simply -i; others restore partial consistency with -iy. Hamzah (') at the start of a word is always omitted. Grammatical endings omitted in pausa are always dropped.

Transliteration from Persian, Turkish, and Urdu

In this work I transliterate technical terms throughout in a single form, usually the Arabic, but the Persian or Turkish when the original form is Persian or Turkish. Names of persons and countries will naturally vary from language to language. But in other writers' works even technical terms, originally Arabic, will often be met with in a Persian form or in still other forms, including the modern romanized Turkish or an adaptation of it. For instance, in such works hadīth may appear as hadīs. Accordingly, the reader should consider the following notes when reading such works, and he may find they apply to the Arabic words he encounters as well as to the other languages.

For the other Islamicate languages transliteration poses certain special problems. It has been less well systematized by scholars, and this is particularly true for Persian, from which (and not directly from Arabic) the Turkish and Urdu and several other languages derived their alphabets.

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8 The 'assimilating' letters are d, dh, l, n, r, s, sh, t, th, z, z.
9 As in European languages Maria, Marie, and Mary represent the same name in different guises, so Husayn, Hoseyn, Huseyin represent a single name in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. As between Arabic and Persian, at least, the equivalence is easy to trace by comparing the equivalent letters in transliteration; but for most purposes the etymology of a name is unimportant to the layman.
Islamicists who are better Arabists than Persianists often treat Persian words exactly as if they were Arabic, only adding four letters: p, ch, zh, g. (Zh is pronounced like s in pleasure; for ch, pronounced as in church, ċ may be substituted by those who avoid digraphs in Arabic; and for zh, ź.) Since Persian is full of words and names derived from Arabic, and it is often difficult to decide whether a given name belongs in fact to an Arabic or a Persian context, such a policy has the advantage of making a decision unnecessary, and from the point of view of alphabetic reversibility (ignoring transcription) seems to work well enough.

But Persian is a separate language. Its alphabet has its own rules and is better rendered by a distinctive system, though preferably differing from that for Arabic as little as possible. Unfortunately, for transliterating Persian, especially with a view to at least partial transcription, no one system has been generally accepted. The following list gives the preferable systems and some alternatives. (Standard forms for Arabic are shown in parentheses.)

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{(th)} & \text{(dh)} & \text{(d)} & \text{(t)} & \text{(z)} & \text{(w)} \\
\text{b} & \text{p} & \text{t} & \text{s} & \text{j} & \text{ch} & \text{kh} & \text{d} & \text{z} & \text{r} & \text{z} & \text{zh} & \text{sh} & \text{s} & \text{sh} & \text{g} & \text{h} & \text{f} & \text{q} & \text{k} & \text{g} & \text{l} & \text{m} & \text{n} & \text{v} & \text{h} & \text{y} \\
\text{z} & \text{z} & \text{z} & \text{z} & \text{z} & \text{z} & \text{gh} & \text{f} & \text{q} & \text{k} & \text{g} & \text{l} & \text{m} & \text{n} & \text{v} & \text{h} & \text{y} \\
\text{(E.I.}: & \text{dj} & \text{č} & \text{[z, ź]} & \text{(E.I.):} & \text{k} \\
\text{a} & \text{i} & \text{u} & \text{ā} & \text{i} & \text{ū} & \text{aw} & \text{ay} & \text{ah} & \text{-i} & \text{e} & \text{o} & \text{i} & \text{u} & \text{ow} & \text{ey} & \text{eh} & \text{-e} & \text{-ye} & \text{ou, au, ei, ai \ e, a} \\
\end{array}
\]

The first row represents the most widely used system, apart from the Arabizing system mentioned above. It has the awkward disadvantage (in addition to diacritics inconvenient on the typewriter, especially when underlining) of using ź for a character different from the Arabic character z is used for. A newer system, whose points of difference are shown on the second line, restores \( \hat{t} \) and \( \hat{\z} \) to the same use as for Arabic and eliminates the conflict over ź. (Bracketed forms are alternatives to ź.)

In the newer system, all diacritics (save that for the long ā vowel) represent non-phonetic distinctions—that is, distinctions in Persian spelling that make no difference in the Persian pronunciation. Hence it fits in with one tendency in transliterating from Persian which ignores all non-phonetic distinctions in Persian pronunciation and so, being essentially a sort of transcription, could almost avoid diacritics altogether. The first line of vowels indicates transliteration practice close to Arabic; the second line indicates tran-

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10 This system, adopted by the Library of Congress, seems to carry most authority at the moment. The Library of Congress has decided to use a bar under the ź instead of the ź suggested by its expert and used elsewhere (e.g., by the editors of the Turkish version of the Encyclopaedia of Islam). The ź is wanting in most printing founts and is apt to be blurred; but the ź is in conflict with usage in the older system as well as being awkward when a word is underlined to italicize. If a single dot over the ź be deemed inconvenient on the typewriter, it may be easily replaced by an apostrophe or by diaeresis, as the macron may be replaced by circumflex and the dot under by cedilla. All these should be available on an academic typewriter.
introduction to the study of Islamic civilization

literature suggesting a closer transcription. On the third line, are shown some further variants that are sometimes used.

In this work, I follow the newer system (ṣ, ẓ, etc.) in rendering consonants, choosing ẓ as clearer than z. But because the vowels of the newer system have appeared so rarely in scholarly work, and would be badly out of place in Indo-Persian anyway, I have retained the vowel system that is closer to the Arabic (using also è, ō in Indo-Persian), except for the Persian linking vowel, rendered -e, -ye. The net result is that for Persian words I spell Arabic-derived names as if in Arabic except for four consonants (w:v; th:ṣ; dh:ẓ; d:z). Compounds from Arabic are run together (and the article assimilated) rather than separated with hyphens.¹¹

All Persian consonants are pronounced nearly as in English, ignoring the diacritics (which make no difference in Persian pronunciation), except that kh and gh are as in Arabic, and q is often like gh (it is so transliterated by some). S is always hissed, g is always hard as in go, zh is like z in azure, w after kh is silent. Vowels are pronounced as in Arabic, except that long à tends toward our a in all; short i is rather like e in bed; aw is au in bureau. Final -ah has the value of e in bed, with h silent. In certain words û was formerly ó, and í, ë; those words are still so pronounced in India and are so rendered for Indo-Persian.

Specifically Turkish and especially Urdu names are relatively infrequent in this work. Modern republican Turkish is naturally to be rendered according to the modern Turkish Latin alphabet, used since 1928 in the Turkish Republic (the Turks of the Soviet Union have used other forms of the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets). There most consonants are pronounced approximately as in English except that c is our j; ç is our ch; ğ is standardly a barely-sounded approximation to Arabic gh; j is the French j (z in azure); ş is our sh. (S of course is hissed, g is hard.) The vowels are a, e, i, o, u, as in Italian, with variations; ö, ü, as in German (French eu and u); and i without a dot (sometimes marked with a circle or a half-circle)—a slightly stifled vowel found also in Russian.

But the republican alphabet cannot readily be extended to the other Turkic languages or even to Ottoman Turkish, partly because its characters conflict with English values and with the system used for Persian and Arabic, and so would be confusing outside a clearly restricted context.

For the Ottoman Turkish, which used the Arabo-Persian alphabet, our ¹¹ Modern Iranians consistently prefer the e and o, which make the diacritic on i and û unnecessary, though perhaps useful where the reader does not know if a name is Arabic or Persian. But the vowel û is phonetically more accurate in most cases than o, as is sometimes i than e. Both i and u are usual in scholarly work dealing with premodern periods and occur frequently toward the beginning of words (hence determining alphabetic position in indexes). It seems justifiable to suggest that e (and ey) and o (and ow) be substituted for i and u only when diacritics are to be dropped altogether—a seemingly no longer justifiable practice. As to compounds, they are misleading to untutored readers if printed separately, and the value of indicating their origin disappears in a second language.
system for Persian will do as a base for the consonants, with the addition of a form of g pronounced n (originally ng), rendered in this work ŋ; and replacing q with k̤, which eliminates a large class of deviations from modern Latin and Cyrillic norms. However, pronunciation varied greatly from place to place and from time to time; in some words g was pronounced y, ẓ and Ʋ were pronounced d, etc.; final plosives were usually unvoiced. Spelling varied also. In some of these cases, it is conventional to follow the Istanbul pronunciation rather than the spelling. Often, but not always, the distinction between k̤ and k, ṣ and s, Ʋ and t, is shown in transliteration by the vowel context; in such cases, the diacritic may be dropped. The vowels are best shown by those of the republican Latin alphabet; Arabic aw becomes ev, ay becomes ey. The three Perso-Arabic long vowels, however, are still distinguished in quality (not quantity) and can usefully be so marked, but usually need not be. (The editors of the Turkish version of the Encyclopaedia of Islam have devised the following system for representing the Ottoman Turkish: ʾ b p t s c ç ĥ h d z r z j s ʃ s z ʃ ː ʃ ə f k k g ŋ l m n v h y.)

Other Turkic languages of Persian script are in this work usually assimilated to Ottoman Turkish or to Persian as seems appropriate, partly because it is often hard to reconstruct the actual pronunciation of a name in its own form of Turkish.

Transliteration from Urdu (an Islamicate language of India) cannot be considered without reference to the received system for Hindi in the Sanskrit alphabet, for the two are substantially a single language. The older Persian transliteration (in which Arabic ɗ became ʢ) was developed with the needs of Urdu in mind and is still the prevailing system for Urdu if there is one. For Urdu transliteration requires, in addition to the characters for the Persian letters, vowels in ĵ and ō and five consonants: four ‘retroflex’ consonants, written (as for Hindi) ṭ, ḍ, ṛ (all different from anything in Arabic), and a sign for vowel nasalization, ņ (or ň or tilda over the vowel). Many consonants in Urdu appear in an aspirated form, that is, accompanied by an h that represents a puff of breath after the stop and not the formation of a fricative. Thus th must be read as a strong t, and so for dh, Ʋh, ɗh, ph, bh, kh, gh, chh, jh, ṛh. Hence kh and gh, as digraphs, can within the Indic context come to stand for two different consonants each: the fricative kh and gh as in Persian and Arabic, and the aspirated kh and gh. (Duplication for th and dh does not occur in that context.) The digraphs can be joined by a bar beneath them when they form a fricative, and not when they form an aspirate. (For Hindi, English ch is often written plain c, and aspirated ch, sometimes transliterated chh, is written ch.)

For the purposes of this work, it seems simpler to transliterate Urdu, when necessary, by the same system as used for Persian, only adding the retroflex ṭ, ḍ, ṛ (as in the Encyclopaedia of Islam), ņ (and nasal ņ). (The fricative k̤h and g̤h may be so underlined; but this merely distinguishes the one digraph from the other, for aspirate kh and gh are equally digraphs and
must not be confused with what could be marked k'h, g'h discussed in the
section on Arabic transliteration.) Except for retroflexes, aspirates, and
nasalization, pronunciation of consonants is much as in Persian (commonest
English sound, with diacritics ignored). Vowels are as in Arabic except: a
like u in cut, ay like a in bad, aw as in awe, è as in they, ḍ as in over.

As to other languages, there is little occasion to transliterate from them
in this work and when occasion arises it will be done, so far as possible, on
one of the following bases. Sometimes there is an agreed scholarly convention
which can be followed. When there is a standard modern romanized form,
that will do even for earlier times; or the transliteration may follow a
Cyrillic script. Sometimes names will be assimilated to one of the above
four languages, when they appear in such a context. The transliteration of
the four languages into English in this work is therefore (for the reasons
given in text and notes):

Arabic: 'b t th j h kh d dh r z s sh š d ṭ z ' gh f q k l m n w h y
Persian: 'b p t š j ch h kh d ţ r z zh s sh š ţ ţ z ' gh f q k g l m n v h y
Urdu: 'b p ţ š j ch h kh d ţ ţ ţ ţ z zh s sh š ţ ţ z ' gh f q k g l m n ŏ v h y
Ottoman Turkish: 'b p t š j ch h kh d ţ r z zh s sh š ţ ţ z ' gh f k k ġ ğ l m n v h y

Arabic: a i u ā ĩ ū aw ay -ah
Persian: a i u ā ĩ ū aw ay -ah -e, -ye
Urdu: a i u ā ĩ ū aw ay -ah
Ottoman Turkish: (a e i o u ō ū ā ĩ ū)

By such systems, transliteration for all the languages is fully reversible
(except some details of Turkish); does not conflict with that for Arabic
(except in the Urdu aspirates th, dh); allows for a fair degree of oral recog­
nizability; offers a minimum of difficulty in being adapted to typewriters
and printers' founts; and suffers minimal loss of recognizability if diacritics
are dropped. The systems used in this work deviate from the second edition
of the Encyclopaedia of Islam as follows:

- in all languages: -ah for -a, q for k (except Turkish), j for dj; no digraph
  bars (unless in Urdu);
- in Persian, Urdu, Turkish: š for th, ť for dh, ţ for ḍ, v for w, ch for č,
  -e(-ye) for -i, and assimilation of article and compounds (-uddin etc.);
- in Indo-Persian and Urdu also: è, ō;
- in Turkish from Arabic also: the Turkish vowels.

MUSLIM PERSONAL NAMES

Many of the personal names to be met with in Islamicate materials will
seem long and forbidding to the beginner and hard to sort out. This is
natural in the case of an alien civilization; the only complete remedy for the
difficulty is long familiarity. Nevertheless, the reader can take note of
certain classes of personal names which he can learn to identify. If he can recognize what is similar in these names, he can then more easily concentrate on their distinguishing features when he meets them in his reading, and so keep them apart.

Muslim personal names have been mostly of Arabic, Persian, or Turkish origin, even in countries with quite different languages; the Arabic element is especially strong. Other languages are of course locally represented, as in Malaysia or Africa. The basic approach to personal naming has been by and large the same everywhere. Until modern times very few people in Muslim countries had ‘family’ names. The commonest way of naming was threefold: first, a ‘given’ name, received at birth; then the given name of the father; and finally, if necessary, one or more descriptive names, such as one indicating the man’s city of origin or his occupation or perhaps his ancestry, his family. In addition, a man of position commonly had one or more honorific names, often bestowed by a ruler. In several times and places there have been, to all intents and purposes, two given names: a specifically Muslim name, usually of Arabic derivation, alongside one of local derivation; an ordinary name alongside one honorific in form; or, among Arabs, a kunyah (explained below) alongside an ordinary name. Usually only one or the other of these was much used.

No one of these various names has necessarily been the ‘filing name’—the one by which one would look up the man in a card catalogue or in a telephone directory. What part of the total appellation is to be used for such quick reference has been a matter of convenience—sometimes whichever of a man’s names was the least common among his fellows. For instance, suppose a man’s given name is Al‘mad, his father’s name is ‘Ali, and he is known as Zinjānī because he comes from Zinjān. There are dozens of Al‘mads in any Muslim city, and dozens of ‘Alis; but very few men from the small place of Zinjān—so the least ambiguous way to refer to the man (except as regards other men from the same place) is Zinjānī. Often there have been two or more such names by which a man was known, perhaps in different circles. Accordingly, in referring to a man it is best for the beginner to follow the lead of whatever author he is depending on, and in cases of doubt to use a combination of as many names as necessary.

There are several elements, found especially in names of Arabic origin, which form an inseparable part of certain sorts of names, and which the student should learn to recognize. \(a\)l- is simply the definite article, ‘the’, and occurs with a great many names. Before certain consonants the \(l\) is assimilated to the consonant, being pronounced—and in some transliterations written—\(r\), \(s\), \(d\), etc. (Cf. the section on Transliteration.) In some cases the \(a\)l- can be either present or absent, indifferently. It is usually omitted in indexing. Abū originally meant ‘father of’, but has come to be, in effect, merely an element in a man’s name: any given name can be added to it, the combination forming a single new name. Among the ancient Arabs
this was used as a sort of epithet or honorific, the \textit{kaunyah}, in addition to the more personal name, e.g., Abû-Bakr. (\textit{Abû-} in Persian and Turkish sometimes becomes \textit{Bi-} or \textit{Bâ-}) \textit{Umm-} has the place in women's names of \textit{Abû} in men's, e.g., Umm-Kulthûm.

The letter b is short for \textit{ibn}, meaning 'son of' (or for \textit{bint}, 'daughter of') which is often used in Arabic between one's given name and the father's name—and further between the father's and grandfather's names, and the grandfather's and great-grandfather's, and so on up the line, which is sometimes traced very far in giving a man's full appellation. 'Ibn-N . . . ' sometimes becomes simply a family name. In languages other than Arabic, and in many modern Arabic lands, the \textit{ibn} is usually not used. On the other hand, in Persian its place may be taken by the suffix \textit{-zâdah}; in Turkish by the suffix \textit{-oglu}, which commonly form family names. Sometimes these are interchanged; thus Ibn-Taqî = Taqi-zadeh.

N.B.: Such elements as \textit{Ibn-} or \textit{Abû-}, as well as certain other prefixed (or suffixed) words like '\textit{Abd-}, cannot be dropped from a name without basically changing it. In this work they will be hyphenated.\textsuperscript{12}

Classes of names to be spotted and kept distinct (this is in no sense an exhaustive list of types of names—it includes only easily recognizable types):

I. Names of prophets as given names:

Most of the Biblical heroes are recognized as prophets by the Muslims, and their names, in Arabic form (sometimes further modified in other languages), are commonly used. (Christians and Jews in Islamicate lands have used special variants of some of these names.) Examples are: Ibrâ'hîm = Abraham; Ismâ'îl = Ishmael; Ishâq = Isaac; Ya'qûb = Jacob; Yûsûf = Joseph; Mûsâ = Moses; Hârûn = Aaron; Dâ'ûd = David; Sulaymân = Solomon; Yahûd = John; Maryam = Mary; 'Isâ = Jesus. In addition, there are several prophets not mentioned in the Bible, notably Muḥammad himself, whose name is very commonly used.

II. Names from favoured Arabic roots: notably

\begin{itemize}
\item[(a)] in \textit{HMD}, three consonants which enter the formation of words having in common some notion of 'praise', thus Muḥammad, Aḥmad, Maḥmûd, Ḥamîd, etc.;
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{12} The use of the hyphen in compound proper names is called for because of the Anglo-Saxon habit of isolating the last element in any personal appellation as a primary, 'last name'. (The use of the hyphen can help to eliminate a remarkably prolific source of confusion in beginners.) Subordinate and inseparable elements in names include: \textit{Ibn-}, \textit{Bint-}, \textit{Umm-}, \textit{Abû-}, \textit{Nûr-}, \textit{Ghûlâm-}, \textit{Mamlûk-}, \textit{Abû-}, \textit{Dhû-}, \textit{Sibî-}; and of suffixed words: \textit{-qoli}, \textit{-bandch}, \textit{-bakhsh}, \textit{-dâd}, \textit{-zâdeh}, \textit{-oglu}. Many other compounds are similarly used as names. In some cases, the subordinate part of the name can be dropped almost at will or else may be used alone; but the hyphen is appropriate wherever the last element in the name cannot properly be used by itself; the reader should not overlook it.
(b) in HSN, forming words having in common some notion of 'good', thus Muḥsin, Ḣasan, Ḩusayn, Ḩassān, etc.;
(e) in S'D, forming words having in common some notion of 'happiness', thus Sa'd, Sa'id, Mas'ud, etc.;
(d) in ZYD, forming words having in common some notion of 'growth', thus Zayd, Yazid (Yaziyd), etc.;
(e) in 'MR, forming words having in common some notion of 'life', thus 'Amr, 'Umar, etc.

III. Names in 'Abd:
The word 'abd means 'slave of', and is prefixed to epithets of God, to form single, indivisible given names. Thus, 'Abd-al-Qādir, 'Slave of the Almighty'. (Hence such names cannot be split up, as sometimes happens in the press.) Other common names of this class are 'Abd-al-Rahmān (or Abdurrahman, in another spelling), and the common 'Abd-Allāh (more usually, 'Abdullāh).

Other words meaning 'slave' are used in the same way: thus the prefixes Mamlūk- and Gholām- and the suffixes -bandeh and -goli. Often these are attached to the name of a prophet or an imām rather than of God.

IV. Names in -Allāh:
Analogous to the above class of names are those ending in -Allāh (or sometimes other divine names) with various first elements (or, sometimes, suffixes); thus, Ḥamd-Allāh, 'Praise-God'. Sometimes similar compound names are formed with a prophetic name; thus, Nur-Muḥammad, 'Light of Muhammad'.

V. Names in -al-din, -al-dawlāh, -al-mulk:
These were originally titles but have often become simply given names. For example, -al-din (or -eddin) means 'of the religion': thus, Qutb-al-din, 'Pole of the religion'; -al-dawlāh (or -eddaula) means 'of the dynasty': thus, Mu'izz-al-dawlāh, 'Strengthener of the dynasty'; -al-mulk means 'of the kingdom': thus, Niẓām-al-mulk, 'good order of the kingdom'. N.B.: These three post-fixed elements sometimes can be dropped without deforming the name beyond recognition.

VI. Names in Mu-:
A majority of Arabic participles start with M, and especially with Mu; and a great many names, originally often honorifics, are in participle form. This is true of the reign names of most of the 'Abbāsid caliphs: Manṣūr, Ma'mūn, Mu'taṣim, Mutawakkil, Mu'taḍid, Mustaṣir. Often these start with Mu- or Must-; which form participles in whole sets of verbs. It is the letters following the initial mu-, that must be taken note of in order to keep names of this class apart.
VII. Names in -ī:

This is the common termination, taken over into several Islamicate languages, indicating origin or relationship. A person from the town Shīrāz is Shīrāzī; a person from India (Hind) is Hindī; a protégé of a man called Sa’d is Sa’dī; a descendant of ‘Uthmān is ‘Uthmānī; a member of the tribe of Kindah is al-Kindī. (The Turkish equivalent ending is -lı or -I, -lu, -Iü.)

Constantly repeated, but not easy to classify by sight, are various other personal names of Arabic origin (masculine: ‘Āli, Ja’far, Ḥabīb, Ḥamzah, Śāliḥ; feminine: Fāṭimah, Zaynab, etc.), of Persian origin (Firūz, Bahrām, etc.), of Turkish origin (Arslān, Timur, etc.), and of still other origins.

Sometimes various titles are used as parts of purely personal names—for instance Malikshāh, in which malik is Arabic and shāh Persian for ‘king’. More common is the use of titles or titular elements to replace a personal name, or used inseparably with it. Among such titles are mīr (amīr), beg, khān, mīrzā, shaykh, shāh, āghā, (āqā), etc. Some titles have a special significance: shāh as prefix often means ‘saint’, as suffix, ‘king’; mīrzā as suffix means ‘prince’, as prefix, ‘sir’; sayyid or sharīf is used for a descendant of Muhammad; ḥājj, or ḥājjī, for one who has made a pilgrimage, not necessarily to Mecca.

In various languages, the same name can sometimes be scarcely identifiable: thus Muḥammad becomes Meḥmed (or Mehmet) in Turkish, Mahmadu in West Africa. In the Russian empire, Muslims themselves have commonly replaced -ī, -oghlu, -zādeh by -ev or ov; or simply added the latter (Russian) endings to names as they stand. Muslims in India have often Anglicized their names in ways answering to vague norms of English pronunciation; thus Syed for Sayyid, Saeed for Sa’d; more generally, ay = y, i = ee, ū = oo, and short a becomes u. In French colonies, Muslims Gallicized their names: s = ss, ū = ou, g = gu, etc.

THE ISLAMICATE CALENDARS

An era is a system of numbering years from a given base year—thus the year 1 of the common Christian era is the year in which Christ was supposedly born. The year 1 of the Islamic era is that of the Hijrah (H.), in which Muḥammad moved from Mecca to Medina and effectively established the Muslim community. That year corresponds to the last part of 622 and the first part of 623 of the Christian, or Common, era (ce).

In contrast to the case with most eras, the ‘years’ of the Islamic era are not true solar years—complete rounds of the seasons—but are lunar ‘years’ of twelve ‘true months’, twelve periods from new moon to new moon. Since a true month has only 29 or 30 days, twelve such months fall short of a solar year by about eleven days. Most lunar calendars that have used true months have kept themselves in line with the solar year by adding an extra
month every three years or so. This was forbidden in the Qur‘ān, and in consequence a date in the Islamic ‘year’ has no fixed relation to the seasons; a given festival, for instance, will pass from summer to spring to winter and autumn and back to summer again three times within a long lifetime. Accordingly the Islamic calendar, while it has been used for ritual and historical purposes, has almost always and everywhere been accompanied by a different, a ‘secular’ calendar, one of solar years, which could be used for fiscal and other practical purposes. These secular Islamicate calendars have been numerous but have never had much prestige, and few of them have been in use long enough, or reckoned systematically enough, to serve for historical purposes. Except in recent times, when the secular calendar used has usually been the Gregorian or modern international calendar, no such auxiliary solar calendar has seriously rivalled the Islamic lunar calendar in general acceptance.

Because the Islamic era does not reckon by solar years even approximately, it is not possible, as it is in the case of other eras, simply to add to the Islamic date the difference in years between the two starting points (622), in order to get the date in the Christian era. If one does not have a conversion table, there is a quick method of finding the date to within a couple of years. Because of the shortness of Islamic ‘years’, an Islamic century is accomplished in three years less than a century of solar years; hence the Islamic dates are always gaining on the Christian at the rate of three in a hundred years. At year 1 of the Hijrah there was a difference of six centuries plus 21 years—Christian year 622. At year 100 there was a difference of six centuries plus 18 years (100 + 618 = Christian year 718); at year 200, of six centuries plus only 15 years (815 CE). By the year 700 the difference is just six centuries—Christian year 1300. After that, it is a difference of six centuries minus so many years. Accordingly, the approximate date in the Christian era can be found by adding to the Islamic date 600 years plus three years for every century before 700 (H.), or minus three years for every century after 700 (H.).

For the arithmetically inclined, a somewhat more exact date can be gained with the formula $G = H - \frac{H + 622}{33}$. The Islamic date of a Gregorian year can be found with $H = G - 622 + \frac{G - 622}{32}$. It must be remembered that such formulae give only the year during which the corresponding year began—the greater part of the latter year may have coincided with a year succeeding the one given.

The months of the Islamic year traditionally have been determined by actual observation of the new moon. Hence the same month had different numbers of days in different years and even in the same year in different

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13 Somewhat easier to use might be the formula stated in the following terms: $G = H - 0.31 H + 622$. 
places; this makes exact dating precarious unless the week-day is also
known (for the Islamic calendar included the seven day week as well as
the month). Under some régimes mathematical means, such as alternating
the months thirty, twenty-nine, thirty, and adding 'leap years' by various
systems, were used to make the calendar more predictable. The months are
in order: Muḥarram, ʿṣafar, Rabīʿ I, Rabīʿ II, Jumādā I, Jumādā II, Rajab,
Shaʿbān, Ramaḍān, Shawwāl, Dhū-ṭ-Qaʿdah, Dhū-ḥ-Ḥijjah.
Since the month began with the sighting of the new moon in the evening,
the day was made to begin at sunset.
The most common month names of the solar Islamicate calendars are
(with appropriate Gregorian equivalents)
for Arabic:

\[\text{Nisān (April), Ayyār (May), Ḥazirān (June), Tamūz (July), Āb (August),}
\]
\[\text{Aylūl (September), Tishrīn al-awwal (October), Tishrīn al-thānī (November),}
\]
\[\text{Kānin al-awwal (December), Kānin al-thānī (January), Shubāṭ (February),}
\]
\[\text{Adhār (March);}
\]
for Persian:

\[\text{Farvardīn (March–April), Urdi-bihisht (April–May), Khurād (May–June),}
\]
\[\text{Tīr (June–July), Mūrād (July–August), Shahrīvar or Shahrīr (Aug.–Sept.),}
\]
\[\text{Mihr (Sept.–Oct.), Ābān (Oct.–Nov.), Āžar (Nov.–Dec.), Dāy (Dec.–Jan.),}
\]
\[\text{Bahman (Jan.–Feb.), Isfand (Feb.–March).}
\]

**HISTORICAL METHOD IN CIVILIZATION STUDIES**

*Historical humanism*

Unless a scholar is content to accept his categories (and hence the questions
he can ask and hence the answers he can arrive at) as given by the accidents
of current predispositions, he cannot escape the obligation of justifying his
selection of units for study, which means justifying his point of view. Such a
justification, in turn, must imply an explicit stand on his role as a scholar.
If there were unanimity in these matters, they might be left tacit—at least,
if the given scholar were in accord with the rest. Fortunately, several quite
different viewpoints guide historical studies generally, and Islamic studies
in particular, in our present world.

Historical studies have been called 'idiographic' as describing dated and
placed particulars, as do many phases of geology or astronomy, in contrast
to 'nomothetic' studies such as physics and chemistry, which are supposed
to lay down rules to hold regardless of date. This distinction has its use-
fulness so long as one bears in mind certain considerations sometimes
forgotten. Firstly, whether the objects of the questions are dated or dateless,
the questions themselves (as befits a cumulative public discipline) ought to
be, in some degree, of timeless significance to human beings: sometimes
perhaps leading to manipulative power, but always leading to better under-
standing of things that matter to us humanly. Moreover, any discipline, ideally, should not be defined exactly by the category of the objects it studies nor even by the methods it uses, and still less by the form of its results—though empirically these may be useful indices, especially in interpreting the various academically recognized fields of inquiry which have grown up largely by historical accident. Ideally, a discipline needs to be set off just to the degree that there is a body of interdependent questions that can be discussed in relative autonomy from other bodies of questions, at least according to some one perspective. In a discipline so set off, it cannot necessarily be decided in advance just what forms of questions will prove to be required or what sorts of methods will prove necessary to answer them effectively. From this point of view, if there is a field of historical studies (as I believe) and not merely a group of several fields, it can be nothing less than the whole body of questions about human cultural development, about human culture in its continuity over time; and here we cannot rule out a potential need to develop relatively dateless generalizations, for instance about what may be possible in cultural change, such generalizations are not simply derivable from any other discipline as such, yet they are necessary for studying what is timelessly important about the dated and placed events of human culture.

These considerations being understood, then it can be said that historical studies of human culture are preponderantly ‘idiographic’ in the sense that even their broader generalizations are usually not dateless, in contrast to certain kinds of nature study, and perhaps in contrast also to certain kinds of social studies of human culture, designed to refine analysis of any given society at any given time. Moreover, in any case, historians’ questions are concerned ultimately with the dated and placed, and when (as they must) they ask questions that are undatable within the historical context, it is for the sake of elucidating particulars which are dated and placed, however broad in scope, and not vice versa. The dated and placed events are not mere examples, not mere raw material for dateless generalizations.

But I am concerned here with a further distinction. Within the body of questions about culture in its continuity over time, even when the focus of interest is admittedly on the dated and placed as such, one can still distinguish historical viewpoints further in terms of what sort of date-bound questions are regarded as primary, the answer to which is the goal of the inquiry; and what sort are regarded as subordinate, yielding information which will help in answering the primary questions. On this basis we may

14 Increased predictability through the ‘lessons’ of history, and hence increased power of manipulation, may sometimes supervene through historical study; but it is surely not its true purpose. On the other hand, prediction as a means of verification sometimes plays an essential role in historical inquiry. This is not, of course, prediction of ‘the future’—that is not the proper purpose of any scholarly or scientific discipline—but prediction of future evidence, which may come in the form of laboratory experiments, of field surveys, or (in the case of history) of newly found documents.
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

distinguish two sorts of historian, 'typicalizers' and 'exceptionalizers'. In practice, the distinction is one of emphasis: the 'exceptionalizer' is concerned with all that concerns the 'typicalizer', or he ought to be; and despite his principles, the 'typicalizer' generally finds himself involved in points he might feel should concern the 'exceptionalizer' alone. Nonetheless, the two viewpoints can issue in the use of differing units and categories in defining the field of study. I believe that in pre-Modern civilization studies, at any rate, the more inclusive view that I am labelling 'exceptionalizing' cannot be left out of account if the humanly most significant questions are to be got at. It is on this principle that I have constructed this work.

Some historians, relatively 'typicalizing' in viewpoint, intend primarily to articulate intelligibly their chosen portion of the total cultural environment as it impinges by way of interacting events on the present human inquirer. They intend to present that environment as it is structured in space and time (asking, in effect, how things came to be as they are now) much as an astronomer studies the particular structure, in space and time, of the solar system. Some may even hope that their work may ultimately serve chiefly to elucidate dateless regularities of culture change, not tied to any dating or placing (at least within the particular span of time and place which human culture as a whole presupposes). Such historians, if fully consistent, must be concerned first with the typical, and then with the exceptional only as it serves to make clear (or perhaps account for) what is or has been typical. If they study a state, or a novel, or a sect, they will study it primarily as typifying, or at least causing, general political or aesthetic or religious patterns—at least the patterns of the time, and perhaps preferably those of all time.

On the other hand, from what may be called a more humanistic viewpoint, the reason for studying the typical is rather that thereby we may be better able to appreciate the exceptional, seeing more fully in just what way it is exceptional. We need to know works of artists or acts of statesmanship which are typical of a period just so that we may the better place the excellent, the outstanding. We study Islamdom as a whole, as a great complex historic event, as well as the various less extensive events that compose it, not primarily as examples of something more general but as something un­recurrent and unrepeatable, and as having importance precisely for that reason. In consequence, we can be as concerned with the great failures as with the great successes, and as concerned with the potential moral implications of an act as with its immediate outcome.

Such inquiry remains legitimate public inquiry, and not just private

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This is not reducible to aesthetic criticism, of course, let alone to straight moral judgment. The difference between the art historian and the art critic—and the corresponding difference in other fields than art—is a matter of the historian's concern with culture as such in its dimension of continuity over time. But such a concern cannot do away with the sense of greatness; it rather puts it in perspective.
antiquarianism, to the extent that the exceptional events were in some sense or other outstanding in the context of mankind generally, and not just for private individuals or groups. Events evidently meet this test when they have altered the context of routine human life in their time, insofar as no region or period of human life has, in the long run, been so isolated that it has not had its effects in turn on the rest of us. On this level, the 'exceptionalizer' is at one with the 'typicalizer'. But he wants to add a further dimension.

It is not merely as events have altered the natural or the socio-cultural context that they can have exceptional significance. So far as there is moral or spiritual solidarity among human beings, apart from physical confrontations at any given time, the fate of each people is relevant to all human beings whether or not it had permanent external consequences otherwise. It is, then, also, and perhaps above all, as events and acts have altered the moral context of human life that they are of universal significance, for they have set irreplaceable standards and norms, and they have posed distinctive challenges and established moral claims which as human beings we dare not ignore. Herodotus wrote his history, he said, to preserve the memory of the great deeds done by the Greeks and the Persians: unrepeatable deeds that have an enduring claim to our respect. Those deeds cannot be imitated, though they may be emulated and in some sense perhaps surpassed. But even now we dare call no man great whose deeds cannot somehow measure up to theirs. Once having known those deeds, the world can never be quite the same for us again: not because of what they may tell us of what we are, may tell us statistically about the potentialities of our hominid species; but because they add to our understanding of who we are, of what we are committed to, as human beings, what is worthy of our wonder and our tears.

We are speaking here of such events and acts as form human cultural institutions on the level of public action. We are dealing with peoples—or, more accurately, with groups of men and women at least relatively autonomous in culture. Purely individual exploits may have something of the same quality, but they are meaningful on a different level and their student is the biographer, not the historian. Yet it is especially in this 'exceptionalizing' perspective that persons' ideal norms and expectations and even the special visions of individuals can be crucial. For they prove to be the mainsprings of creativity at the interstices of routine patterns, when exceptional circumstances arise and something new must be found to do. This is how, in fact, the would-be 'typicalizer' finds himself dragged into matters more suited to the programme of the 'exceptionalizer'.

Clearly, the serious 'exceptionalizer'—despite the doubtful example of some scholarly story-tellers—necessarily needs to understand all that the most 'social-scientific' of the 'typicalizers' will want to be studying. Always, of course, visions and ideals can come into play only within the leeway allowed by the human interests (material and imaginative) of those less concerned with ideals. Ultimately all historical 'why's' must be driven back (often in
the form of ‘how could that have become effective?’ to circumstances of hominid natural and cultural ecology—the circumstances which determine that what would otherwise be the individual random ‘accidents’ that shape history will not simply cancel each other out but will be reinforced and cumulatively lead in a single direction. However irrational human beings may be, in the long run their irrationalities are mostly random. It is their rational calculations that can be reinforced in continuing human groups and can show persisting orientation and development—even when they are calculations on misconceived presuppositions. Hence group interests have a way of asserting themselves. Group interests seem ultimately based in ecological circumstances in general and, more particularly, in that cumulative development of cultural resources which the essential internal instability of cultural traditions assures will be likely, in the long run, to be ever more elaborated and so to require ever new adjustments.

But such ecological circumstances merely set the limits of what is possible. Within those limits, the personal vision has its opportunity. For when habitual, routine thinking will no longer work, it is the man or woman with imagination who will produce the new alternatives. At this point, the concerned conscience can come into play. It may or may not prove adequate to the challenge. But in either case, it is such personal vision that is the most human part of human history.

Hence the humanistic historian must concern himself with the great commitments and loyalties that human beings have borne, within which every sort of norm and ideal has been made explicit; and he must concern himself with the interactions and dialogues in which these commitments have been expressed. Hence, for an ‘exceptionalizing’ historian with such intentions, it is Islamdom as a morally, humanly relevant complex of traditions, unique and irreversible, that can form his canvas. Whether it ‘led to’ anything evident in Modern times must be less important than the quality of its excellence as a vital human response and an irreplaceable human endeavour. In this capacity, it would challenge our human respect and recognition even if it had played a far less great role than, in fact, it did play in articulating the human cultural nexus in time and space and in producing the world as we find it now.

On scholarly precommitments

Because of the central role, in historical studies, of human loyalties and commitments, the personal commitments of scholars play an even greater

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16 It is for this reason that every ‘why this?’ presupposes at least one ‘why not that?’ ‘Might-have-beens’ are built into the inquiry of any historian, whether explicit or not, just as they are built into that of any other scholar or scientist.

17 On the self-determination of each new generation—as against ‘blind tradition’—compare the section on determinacy in traditions, below.
role in historical studies than in other studies, a role that stands out in special
relief in Islamics studies.

On the most serious levels of historical scholarship—where the human
relevance of major cultural traditions is at issue, such as that of religious
or artistic or legal or governmental traditions, or even that of whole civiliza-
tions—historical judgment cannot be entirely disengaged from the basic
precommitments of inquirers. Indeed, it is not necessarily desirable that it
should be: the very issues can arise only as we are humanly deeply engaged.
Inquiries by pure specialists, seeking only to straighten out this or that
detail brought up by some greater scholar who was humanly engaged and
had discussed the great issues, may bring useful clarifications but often miss
the main points. Precommitment can lead the unwary—and often even the
most cautious scholar—to biased judgment. Bias comes especially in the
questions he poses and in the type of category he uses, where, indeed, bias
is especially hard to track down because it is hard to suspect the very terms
one uses, which seem so innocently neutral. Nevertheless, the bias produced
by precommitment can be guarded against; the answer to it cannot finally
be to divest ourselves of all commitments, but to learn to profit by the
concern and insight they permit, while avoiding their pitfalls.

Such basic precommitments are always to a degree idiosyncratic in really
serious scholars; yet the deeper they are, the more fully they are likely to
be rooted in one of the major cultural traditions of ultimate overall com-
mitment. In fact, certain of these traditions have loomed especially large in
determining the view points of the masters of Islamics studies, who have
done the most to set the problems and the framework within which other
Islamicists have worked. I shall mention five, three old and two new. The
Christian tradition—in Catholic or in Protestant form—has been deeply
determinative for many Western scholars, as has Judaism for still others.
More recently, increasing numbers of scholars committed to the Islamic
tradition—Shari‘ah-minded or Shi‘i—are making their contributions to
scholarship in the field. The pitfalls that await scholars committed to any
of these traditions are evident enough in such scholars’ work, at least to any
scholar of a rival commitment. It is no guarantee of balanced insight, to be
a Muslim, nor of impartiality, to be a non-Muslim. Alongside these older
traditions, and representing precommitments leading to the same sorts of
pitfalls as lurk in commitment to Christianity or Islam, we find Marxists
on the one hand and dedicated Westernists on the other. I call ‘Westernists’
those whose highest allegiance is to what they call Western culture, as the
unique or at least the most adequate embodiment of transcendent ideals of
liberty and truth. They usually share, to some degree, a Christian viewpoint
on Islam, insofar as the Christian tradition has been so central to Western
culture, however much personally they may reject the claims to allegiance of
Christianity in itself. Not all Islamicists are consciously committed to one
of these major allegiances; but for many who are not, the alternative is not
genuine independence and objectivity. Commonly the alternative, rather, is more limited horizons and shallower awareness, together with unconscious and hence unanalyzed piecemeal commitment to partisan viewpoints which, in those consciously committed, are subject to conscious review and control.

Accordingly, the problem of how one may legitimately go about studying Islam from within a commitment to another great tradition—and in particular how to go about studying it from within a Christian commitment—is no by-problem of interest only to a few scholars who by exception are religiously inclined. It is central to the whole scholarly problem. Jean-Jacques Waardenburg, in *L'Islam dans le miroir de l'Occident: comment quelques orientalistes occidentaux se sont penchés sur l'Islam et se sont formés une image de cette religion* (The Hague, 1963), has demonstrated how the work of the formative Islamicists Ignaz Goldziher, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, Carl Becker, Duncan MacDonald, and Louis Massignon was in each case intimately and pervasively marked by the basic precommitments of these men (though he does not use the concept 'Westernist'). The cultural allegiance of the serious scholar is crucial in his work. This is not to say that it is impossible to study fairly one religious tradition from within another, as has sometimes been suggested. Ultimately all faith is private, and it is often far easier for congenial temperaments to understand each other across the lines of religious or cultural tradition than it is for contrasting temperaments to make sense of each other's faith even when they follow the same cult and utter the same creed. We are primarily human beings and only secondarily participants in this or that tradition. Nevertheless, not only the scholars' cultural environment at large but their explicit precommitments, which brought the greater of the scholars to their inquiry in the first place, have determined the categories with which they have undertaken their studies. Only by a conscious and well-examined understanding of the limits of these precommitments and of what is possible within and beyond them can we hope to take advantage of our immediate humanness to reach any direct appreciation of major cultural traditions we do not share—and perhaps even of traditions we do share.

Where we compare the Occident and Islamdom in general, and Christianity and Islam in particular, such awareness is especially essential. There has been a tendency, among those Christians who have been willing to concede spiritual validity to Islam at all, to see Islam as, in one way or other, a truncated version of Christian truth: all or virtually all the truth to be found in Islam is to be found in Christianity, but Christianity leads beyond that truth to a crowning essential truth that eludes the Muslim's grasp. Correspondingly, Muslims have historically seen Christianity as a truncated or perverted Islam. But such a comparison is, on the face of it, unsound at least for historical purposes. It can hardly be intelligible, to those Christians or Muslims having such views, how it can be that intelligent, sensitive, and
upright persons can prefer Islam to Christianity, or vice versa, once they have been exposed to the appeal of both.

In sensitive hands, some such approach can have suggestive results, indeed. The most attractive such interpretation of Islam from the Christian side is surely that of Louis Massignon, set forth allusively in a number of his articles, such as ‘Salmân Pâk et les prémices spirituelles de l’Islam iranien’, Société des Etudes Iranienes, vol. 7 (1934), and in his several articles on the Seven Sleepers; he saw Islam as a community in spiritual exile, veiled from the divine presence, yet through that very exile charged with a special witness to bear. (Giulio Basetti-Sani, Mohammed et Saint François [Commissariat de Terre-Sainte, Ottawa, 1959], has developed part of Massignon’s idea in his beautiful and knowledgeable, if not very scholarly, book, which forms a suggestive contribution to a modern mythology.) A less poetic, though still sensitive, approach to Islam in Christian terms is offered by Eric Bethmann’s Bridge to Islam (Nashville, Tenn., 1950) and by the works of Kenneth Cragg. Yet it remains true that the ultimate judgments such approaches presuppose are suspect. A serious exploration of any one religious tradition in its several dimensions could consume more than one lifetime, and it is not to be expected that many persons can genuinely explore two. If this fact helps account for so many intelligent persons not seeing the truth as the apologist sees it, it also suggests that the apologist too is deceiving himself if he thinks he is qualified to judge the rival tradition. A view of Islam as a Christianity manqué, or the reverse, however elegantly formulated, must be received with great scepticism.

But the readiest alternatives, among those willing to concede some truth to a rival tradition, are equally unsatisfactory for making a comparison. One may resort to syncretistic assimilation, as if superficially similar elements in the two traditions could be identified; but this is bound to falsify one tradition or both—if only by not recognizing the genuineness of the demand, at the heart of each, for exclusive historical commitment. For instance, in both traditions there is a demand for moral behaviour on the basis not of arbitrary human custom but of divine revelation; and at least in broad areas, the moral norms implied in the two revelations are much alike. Yet for Christians, being based in revelation means being in response to redemptive love as it is confronted through the presence of a divine-human life and the sacramental fellowship of which that is the source. For Muslims, being based in revelation means being in response to total moral challenge as it is confronted in an explicit divine message handed on through a loyal human community. The two senses of revelation not only contrast to one another: they exclude one another categorically. Yet to abstract from them is to make pointless both the Christian and the Muslim demand for a revealed morality over against human custom.

To avoid the over-explicit identifications of syncretism, one may resort frankly to reducing both traditions to some lowest common denominator—a
formless mysticism or a vague appeal to the common goodwill of mankind. But in practice this means appealing to the prestige carried by the great traditions, on behalf of something that can rise above the level of impotent platitudes only as the quite private viewpoint of an individual.

The two traditions, as such, must be recognized as incompatible in their demands, short of some genuinely higher synthesis presumably not yet available to us. And we must retain this sense of tension between them without interpreting the one by the standards of the other. This may be accomplished, in some degree, through a comparison of the two structures, of what sorts of elements tend to get subordinated and what tend to get highlighted. In such a perception, those committed and those with no commitment can join, provided each maintains a sensitive human awareness of what can be humanly at stake at every point. But this is possible only so far as the elements chosen can be evaluated in some independence. This is an ideal only approximable at best. Hence even the best comparison cannot be regarded as providing an objective basis for ultimate judging between traditions. Yet it may make more understandable the special strengths of Islam—and its weaknesses—in the given historical circumstances.

I have developed this point about the irreducible incompatibility of any two traditions of faith somewhat more in detail in my ‘A Comparison of Islam and Christianity as Frameworks for Religious Life’; but there I did not develop adequately what I feel must be the basis for mutual comprehension among religious traditions: growth within tension, through persistent dialogue. (That article was published in Diogenes, 1960, but in so mangled a form that it cannot be suggested for reading. The reprint by the University of Chicago Committee on Southern Asian Studies, reprint series No. 10, contains a fuller text and a list of essential corrigenda to the printed portion of the text.)

On defining civilizations

In civilization studies—the study of the great cultural heritages (especially those dating from the pre-Modern cited ages)—what may be called a ‘civilization’ forms a primary unit of reference. Yet the specification of such units is only partly given by the data itself. In part, it is a function of the inquirer’s purposes.

Once society has become fairly complex, every people, even each sector of the population within what can be called a people, has had a degree of cultural self-sufficiency. At the same time, even the largest identifiable group of peoples has never been totally self-sufficient. Even the cultural patterns so large a group have in common will show interrelations with those of yet more distant peoples. Social groupings have intergraded or overlapped almost indefinitely throughout the Eastern Hemisphere since long before Islamic times. If we arrange societies merely according to their stock of
cultural notions, institutions, and techniques, then a great many dividing lines among pre-Modern civilized societies make some sense, and no dividing line within the Eastern Hemisphere makes final sense. It has been effectively argued, on the basis of the cultural techniques and resources to be found there, that all the lands from Gaul to Iran, from at least ancient classical times onward, have formed but a single cultural world. But the same sort of arguments would lead us on to perceive a still wider Indo-Mediterranean unity, or even (in lesser degree) the unity of the whole Afro-Eurasian citied zone. In these circumstances, any attempt to characterize a less extensive 'civilization' requires adopting an explicit basis on which to set off one body of peoples from another as a civilization; but too often such groupings have been taken as given, on extraneous grounds, and characterizations have then been attempted without regard to the basis on which the grouping was made.

We have yet to develop an adequate analysis of cultural forms for studying the pre-Modern citied societies. Anthropologists have acquired some sophistication in dealing with non-citied societies, and some of them have extrapolated their methods into citied societies. Sociologists have learned to study Modern Technical society, and generally societies of the Technical Age in the light of it. But far too few since Max Weber have systematically explored the periods and areas between—that is, from Sumer to the French Revolution. This is partly because the lack of a tenable framework of world history, which would supply an elementary sense of the proportions and interrelations of the field, has hampered any comparative studies there. Anything may be compared with anything else, but fruitful comparisons require relevantly comparable units of comparison, which can be assured only through a sound sense of overall context. In consequence, the questions posed about the pre-Modern civilizations, and in particular about the Islamicate, have often been irrelevant or misleading, and the answers they yield have been beside the point or positively false.

It may be noted here that this lack of a proper world-historical framework has probably arisen at least in part for want of a proper framework for scholarly co-operation. What are commonly called 'Oriental studies' form the larger part of what are better called 'civilization studies', including the European heritage along with the others, since fundamentally the same methods are involved in all cases, and the historical problems are all interrelated. It is absurd for scholars in Islamics studies to be sharing conferences with those in Chinese studies more readily than with those in Medieval European studies.

It has largely been philologians who have—by default—determined our category of 'civilizations': a civilization is what is carried in the literature of a single language, or of a single group of culturally related languages. This notion has been presupposed by Carl Becker, Gustave von Grunebaum, and Jörg Kraemer, for instance. It is not, in fact, a bad notion, to the extent
that my definition of a civilization in terms of lettered traditions is sound. But it is not the same as what I am suggesting; it needs to be refined. In crude form it has led, for instance (as we shall be noting), to an approach in which everything carried in Arabic, including pre-Islamic pagan Bedouin customs, is regarded as native and ancestral to the civilization that later expressed itself largely in Arabic; while materials in Syriac, for instance, produced in the mainstream of cultural development under the earlier Muslim rulers and leading directly to central features in the urban life of the civilization, are regarded as 'foreign' to it, and as 'influencing' it when their ideas were 'borrowed' into it at the point when their exponents began to use Arabic. The resulting picture of cultural development is, I believe, erroneous. In principle, a field of study such as 'whatever culture happens to be attested in Arabic documents' can be legitimate; but its relevance is limited. If, for instance, we deal not with Islam but with Arabic as our point of departure, so regarding Iranians as outsiders, we think of Bedouin notions as 'surviving' while Iranian ones 'influence' the later culture from outside. The Arabic culture of the High Caliphate then takes on two traits: (a) suddenness; (b) a derivative character, as largely 'borrowed'. What a difference in tone, if rather we should look at the problems posed by an overlay of Arabic 'borrowing' upon Iranian and Syriac 'survivals'! Accordingly, we must respect the challenge presented by men like Toynbee, who defines his civilizations according to criteria based on inner cultural development. When he divides what has been called 'Islamic' civilization among three different civilizations, I believe he is in error, but he reminds us that if we make it a single civilization we must give some reason why.

The reason for distinguishing a 'civilization' cannot be a single, universal one, however; it must almost be special to each case. For no more than language does any other one criterion necessarily determine a grouping that will be worth studying as a major large-scale culture. Even a localized culture, at least on the level of citied and lettered life, cannot be defined simply in terms either of component traits or of participant families. In cross-section, a culture appears as a pattern of lifeways received among mutually recognized family groups. Over time, it may be more fully defined as a relatively autonomous complex of interdependent cumulative traditions, in which an unpredictable range of family groups may take part. It forms an overall setting within which each particular tradition develops. But even within one relatively local culture, some traditions—a given school of painting, say, or a particular cult—may come to an end, and new ones may take their places. It is not possible to distinguish, in any absolute sense, authentic or viable from unauthentic or unviable traits in a culture, or even authentic from unauthentic traditions. Yet a culture does have a certain integrality. The consequences and the meaning of any given trait, inherited or newly introduced, will depend at any given time on what implications it has for the ongoing interaction, the dialogue or dialogues into which it fits (or which it confuses). The
consequences and ultimate meaning of any given particular tradition will in turn depend on its implications for the cultural setting as a whole. These implications will be more decisive, the more they touch the most persistent and widely ramified features of the culture. Over time, then, what sets off a culture as an integral unity in some degree is whatever makes for cultural continuity in that particular culture.

On the wider and more rarefied level of what may be called a 'civilization', cultural identity is even more problematic and what will make for continuity is even less predictably formulable. We may indeed describe the most likely situations in general terms which may seem to settle the matter. If we may call a 'civilization' any wider grouping of cultures in so far as they share consciously in interdependent cumulative traditions (presumably on the level of 'high culture')—of the relatively widely shared cultural forms at the urban, literate level of complexity and sophistication), then the shared traditions will be likely to centre in some range of 'high' cultural experience to which the cultures are committed in common. This may be a matter of literary and philosophical as well as political and legal values carried in lettered tradition, with or without explicit allegiance to a given religious community. (Usually, lettered tradition is indissociable from the continuity of written language; yet there need not be cultural identity except marginally between two groups, especially in different periods, using the same language. Many would refuse to put ancient Attica and Christian Byzantium in the same civilization just because both used Greek and even read Homer. What matters is the dominant lettered traditions, with their attendant commitments, in whatever language.) When such major lettered traditions, then, are carried in common, often there will be a continuity likewise in social and economic institutions generally. All cultural traditions tend to be closely interdependent. Often the integration within one area has been so marked and the contrasts between that area and others so strong that at any given time a demarcation line has been quite clear, and that line has tended to perpetuate itself. Thus we get, especially in cross-section, the impression of clearly marked civilizations parcelling out among themselves the Eastern Hemisphere.

But this apparent clarity should not persuade the historian to take his categories for granted. There will always be 'borderline' and 'anomalous' cases which are quite as normal as the major groupings. It would be hard to place such peoples as Georgians and Armenians unequivocally within any one major 'civilization'. In any case, it cannot be clear in advance what sorts of life patterns will in fact be found to be shared among the peoples forming what can be called a 'civilization'. Each civilization defines its own scope, just as does each religion. There may even be several sorts of basic continuity which may overlap in range. Thus, depending on one's viewpoint, Byzantine culture may be seen as continuing the ancient Hellenic tradition, or as part of a Christendom briefer in time but wider in area; and in each case there is a
genuine and effective continuity on the level of 'high culture' and its commitments. Hence over a time span it often becomes a matter of choice—depending on what sort of lettered traditions one specially wants to inquire into—which among several possible delimitations will prove most suitable. Then the scholarly treatment of the 'civilization' must differ with the grounds for singling it out.

On determinacy in traditions

However a civilization be defined, it must not be hypostatized, as if it had a life independent of its human carriers. The inherited cultural expectations at any given time form part of the realities that members of a given society must reckon with. They even put limits on what the most alert of those members can see in their environment. But they have no effect except as they interact with the actual environment and the immediate interests of all concerned. The determinacy of tradition is limited, in the long run, by the requirement that it be continuingly relevant in current circumstances.

Continuing relevancy is crucial to recall especially when cross-cultural comparisons are being made. For instance, in an attempt to understand why it was in the Occident that, eventually, technicalized society arose, scholars have looked to the state of the Occident in the centuries preceding the transformations. This can be done along two lines: by studying the special circumstances of the time when the transformations began and the special opportunities open to Occidentals at that time; or by studying inherent differences between Occidental culture and other cultures. In the latter case, a comparative study of the High Medieval Occident with its contemporaries is fundamental.

It is this latter case that has seemed the easier in the past. An adequate framework of overall world history was lacking as a basis for studying the special characteristics of the time of the transformation itself, whereas the chief other societies were just well enough known as isolated entities to allow specious global generalizations to be made about their cultural traits, traits which could be contrasted to subtle traits traceable in the more intimately understood Occident. Moreover, studying inherent traits in the Occident did have undeniable relevance to a related question, often confused with the question why it was the Occident that launched Modernity. The special form that modern technicalization took, coming where it did, certainly owes much to special traits of the Occident in which it arose. Since without adequate world-historical inquiries it is hard to sort out what has been essential and what accidental in technical Modernity, studies of what was special to Occidental culture as such, which were assured at least some success in accounting for the shape of Modernity as it actually arose, were mistakenly supposed to have succeeded in accounting for where and when it arose. Accordingly, scholars have been tempted to invoke, in accounting for the
advent of Modernity, the determinant effect of a fortunate traditional attitude or combination of attitudes in the pre-Modern Occident. Complementarily to that, often enough, they have invoked the 'dead hand of tradition' to explain the 'failure' of other societies such as the Islamicate, which are then compared, to their disadvantage, with the pre-Modern Occident. The circumstances of the time when Modernity was launched have been relatively neglected.

All attempts that I have yet seen to invoke pre-Modern seminal traits in the Occident can be shown to fail under close historical analysis, once other societies begin to be known as intimately as the Occident. This applies also to the great master, Max Weber, who tried to show that the Occident inherited a unique combination of rationality and activism. As can be seen here and there in this work, most of the traits, rational or activist, by which he sought to set off the Occident either are found in strength elsewhere also; or else, so far as they are unique (and all cultural traits are unique to a degree), they do not bear the weight of being denominated as so uniquely 'rational' as he would make them. This applies to both Occidental law and Occidental theology, for instance, where he partly mistook certain sorts of formalism for rationality, and partly simply did not know the extent among Muslims, for instance, of a probing rational drive. But when the several traits prove not to be so exceptional, the special combination of them that he invoked as decisive loses its cogency.

It must also be noted that his method, as such, sometimes did not push quite far enough. He sometimes depicted the attitudes he found as if they were standing facts with automatic consequences, rather then processes that never remain quite the same and have regularly to be renewed. Accordingly, he could neglect the historical question of what it was that kept the attitude in being once it had arisen; and so he failed to see the full range of its interaction with other things, including with its own consequences.

The question of the relation of pre-Modern Occidental culture to Modernity is a specially intriguing case of a much wider problem: the relative role in historical development of traditional culture and of the current play of interests. When it becomes clear that long-range historical change cannot be adequately interpreted in terms of the initiative of great men or of direct geographical or racial causation; and when interpretation through the evident moral level of the leading classes or even through immediate economic interests proves to require explanation in turn of why the moral level or the economic interests were as they were; then recourse can be had to explanation by unevident but seminal culture traits. These seminal traits are supposed to have latent implications, not visible in the earlier course of the society, the consequences of which unfold at a later stage of the society's development—if it may be assumed that the society has a determinate course of development. Of the several sorts of seminal traits invoked, the most commonly appealed to are inherited attitudes of mind, evaluations of what is good and
what bad. Thus in contrast to an Occidental inclination to rationalize and to reinvest is posited an eternal Chinese inclination to tao-ize and to become gentry; whereupon the failure of the Chinese to carry through an industrial revolution is ascribed to their successful families’ not persisting in industry, but turning to other, more honoured, careers. (If the Chinese had been the first to fully industrialize, they might have accounted for this also by their wealthy families’ tendency to become gentry—and so to sell their industries to ever new blood, willing to innovate.)

I am sure that seminal traits may exist, though it is hard to pin them down. But any evaluation of their historical effects must take into account the full ecological setting of a given generation—that is, all the conditions (including both geographically and socially given resources as well as current interrelations with other groups) that would determine the effective advantage of various possible lines of action and hence of attitudes that might be adopted. Ideally, one should determine the points at which, under the given conditions, additional investment of money, time, intellectual effort, etc., would yield diminishing returns. Such calculations would have to take into account natural, man-made, and demographic resources, technical and scientific alternatives available, and social institutions as given to that generation, including patterns of expectation, and what at that time these expectations depended on (that is, what it was that, at that time, might have altered them). Such a listing would have to include the consequences of ancestors’ attitudes; but under the circumstances facing any given generation, the consequences of those attitudes need not come to the same thing as the attitudes themselves. Even the outcome, in a given setting, of child-raising techniques—the area where an unconscious past seems likely to weigh heaviest—can vary strongly.

Attitudes like ‘individualism’, ‘sense of personal vocation’, or ‘world-negation’ are hard to define closely enough for such purposes. It is easier to trace the particular tokens of such attitudes; and these can come to take on quite opposite implications in a new setting. Thus the expectation in the USA, that each nuclear family should have its own lawn-surrounded house, which originally was doubtless a bulwark of certain aspects of individual independence, can lead, in certain sorts of ‘organization-man’ suburbia, to bolstering social involvement and conformity. Or the exclusivity of the Qurʾān, with its rejection of the reliability of Jewish and Christian religious witness, could contribute (by way of the self-containedness of the Qurʾānic exegesis) to the special universalism and tolerance of divergent traditions (and not only of those of the People of the Book), which characterize some strains of Ṣūfism.

Indeed, whatever the situation may be in non-lettered societies, in every complex society most relevant attitudes are to be found either among the multiplicity of variant and practical traditions, or within that lettered tradition that has maximum prestige. Most temperaments and most possible
facets of experience that are to be found in any major tradition can be found in corresponding traditions elsewhere. Accordingly, tradition can account for almost anything. Thus for a time it was sought to prove that basic familistic attitudes would prevent the Chinese from turning Communist; now the Chinese bureaucratic heritage is shown to have made the Chinese peculiarly susceptible to Communism.

Accordingly, it is wise to posit as a basic principle, and any deviation from which must bear the burden of proof, that every generation makes its own decisions. (This is perhaps a partial application of Ranke’s principle that all generations are morally equidistant from God.) A generation is not bound by the attitudes of its ancestors, as such, though it must reckon with their consequences and may indeed find itself severely limited by those consequences in the range of choices among which it can decide.

The difference between major traditions lies not so much in the particular elements present within them, but in the relative weighting of them and the structuring of their interplay within the total context. If this structuring remains relatively constant (in the very nature of tradition, it cannot remain absolutely so), it will be because the predisposing conditions remain relatively constant, and because they are further reinforced by the institutionalizing of attitudes appropriate to them. Such institutionalizing can indeed be crucial in making the predisposing conditions fully effective: e.g., the mercantile bias of the Irano-Semitic cultural traditions, already so visible in the development of the monotheisms, was given fully free play only under the auspices of Islam. The triumph of Islam was made possible by its special adaptation to that bias, but its triumph in turn allowed that bias to determine the subsequent course of Irano-Semitic history. Nevertheless, the consequences of such institutionalization cannot reach very far in independence of the predisposing conditions. They can allow a tendency already the strongest in the field to become fully effective, and they can then reduce fluctuations that might result from variations in the underlying conditions, so that a temporary or a local deviation from the general norm will not produce a total cultural disruption. But if altered basic conditions long persist, the corresponding attitudes and their institutionalization will soon be changed to match.

Historical change is continuous and all traditions are open and in motion, by the very necessity of the fact that they are always in internal imbalance. Minds are always probing the edges of what is currently possible. But even apart from this, we are primarily human beings with our personal interests to pursue, and only secondarily participants in this or that tradition. Any tradition must be regularly reinforced by current conditions so that it answers to current interests or it will perish by drying up—or be transformed into something relevant. Whatever unity of patterning we may be able to discover, as to primacy of orientations or as to validation of norms of organization—whatever sense of common style we may find in the culture, that is—may be very pervasive and persistent and yet be essentially fragile. As
soon as new positive possibilities open up, the unity of patterning is quickly vulnerable. To the extent that a homogeneous and compelling style is attained, in fact, it must be regarded as a delicate flower, not a tap root; it is not something imposed by cultural necessity, though the range of potentialities may be given so, but something achieved by creative effort.

A special word has to be said about one of the crudest, yet remarkably pervasive forms of hypostatizing a cultural tradition—or, in this case, a whole series of them. The misimpression that 'the East' has latterly been awaking from a 'millennial torpor' is still remarkably widespread. It results, of course (like the term 'East' itself), from the profound ignorance of world history not only among modern Westerners but among others as well, whose eager vaunting of the antiquity of their institutions was taken at face value by Westerners.

We may single out two types of scholar who have reinforced the misimpression. Western tourists, whose moods played a large role even in scholarship, easily mistook the exotic for the immemorial, and were necessarily blind to subtler institutional changes. Their impressions, then, were dignified into learned theses, sometimes of a racialist hue, by scholars bemused by the spectacular progressiveness of their own West, and ready to write off other societies as irrelevant. Reading back the recent Western pace of activity into the earlier Occidental past by a foreshortening of time-spans in the distance, and unaware that in other parts of the world there was a comparably active past, Western scholars assumed that the comparatively slow pace of technical and intellectual development which they could perceive in the nineteenth-century world abroad amounted to no development at all, and marked a difference of race and place rather than one of age.

But other Western scholars—well represented in 'area studies'—have confirmed the misimpression by an opposite error. While more or less recognizing the comparability of pre-Modern Western and non-Western societies as to degree of cultural activity, they have blanketed all pre-Modern areas under the common term 'traditional', the misleading tendency of which we have already seen, as if all had been asleep together (save in certain periods of undeniable florescence)—rather than all awake together. As we have noted, the degree to which pre-technicalized and even pre-literate peoples have been bound by the 'dead hand of tradition' has been greatly exaggerated. Among Muslims, at any rate, the major institutions of each age can be shown to have their own functional justification in their own time: Muslim social decisions, even under the conservative spirit, were made not primarily out of deference to the past but as meeting concrete practical interests of dominant social groups. Whether it is the 'East' or the 'pre-Modern' that is being misperceived, the postulate of essential changelessness obscures the important question of how the particular posture in which various peoples happened to be at the moment of the Transmutation affected their destiny under its impact. There is too ready an answer to the question
of why 'reform' efforts so often failed: the 'tradition-bound' lands were ruled by blind conservatives. Some are thus spared the trouble of discovering what very practical and alert statesmen those 'tradition-bound' men often were... except in the case of the Japanese, who are gratuitously labelled 'good imitators'.

On the history of Islamics studies

Only gradually have scholars come to recognize the relevance of the scholar's perspective in delimiting his field, enough to make the perspective conscious and so keep it relatively under control. Historically, scholars' notions of 'Islam' as a field have been rather arbitrarily determined by a series of political and other extraneous circumstances. These notions still have their consequences. Almost all stages of the historical development of modern Islamics studies are represented in the works that an inquirer must still consult in the library. What is more, many of these stages are still represented in studies made in the mid-twentieth century. Hence even the relatively casual student of things Islamic should be aware of the history of Islamics studies. This will allow him better to appreciate the relevance of the individual scholarly studies to whatever his own interests are, as well as put him on guard against various endemic but avoidable errors that have come to prevail in the field.

Because of the cultural circumstances of the Modern Technical Age, Western scholarship has been the chief channel for studies of a Modern type in the Islamics field at least until very recently. Western scholarship entered the Islamics field above all by three paths. First, there were those who studied the Ottoman empire, which played so major a role in modern Europe. They came to it usually in the first instance from the viewpoint of European diplomatic history. Such scholars tended to see the whole of Islamdom from the political perspective of Istanbul, the Ottoman capital. Second, there were those, normally British, who entered Islamics studies in India so as to master Persian as good civil servants, or at least they were inspired by Indian interests. For them, the imperial transition of Delhi tended to be the culmination of Islamicate history. Third, there were the Semitists, often interested primarily in Hebrew studies, who were lured into Arabic. For them, headquarters tended to be Cairo, the most vital Arabic-using cities in the nineteenth century, though some turned to Syria or the Maghrib. They were commonly philologians rather than historians, and they learned to see Islamicate culture through the eyes of the late Egyptian and Syrian Sunnî writers most in vogue in Cairo. Other paths—that of the Spaniards and some Frenchmen who focused on the Muslims in Medieval Spain, that of the Russians who focused on the

* On the use of the term 'Islamics', see the section on usage in Islamics studies below.
northern Muslims—were generally less important. All paths were at one in paying relatively little attention to the central areas of the Fertile Crescent and Iran, with their tendency towards Shi‘ism; areas that tended to be most remote from Western penetration. Unless perhaps in Russia, studies of the central areas still tend to be neglected except for the earliest centuries; Islamdom is rarely seen from such a perspective.

For a long time, in any of the paths it took, Modern Western scholarship was largely a matter of translating the results of pre-Modern Muslim scholarship and adapting them into Occidental categories. Improvement in Western scholarship was largely a matter of moving from later, secondary Muslim sources to earlier, more nearly primary ones; new editions of more ancient texts tended to be the most important scholarly events. At the same time, the Western scholarly viewpoint changed in response to shifts in viewpoint which took place during the nineteenth century among Muslims themselves: shifts which emphasized the importance of the early Arabic period and the Shari‘ah associated with it (as against the more recent Persianate and Šūfī tendencies, which were being rejected as decadent). Both these currents of change tended to emphasize the earlier periods and the Arabic documents as the object of the best scholarly work and the focus of scholarly interpretations. In consequence (especially with the decline of Istanbul in international importance after 1918), the Cairene path to Islamic studies became the Islamicist’s path par excellence, while other paths to Islamics studies came to be looked on as of more local relevance: via Istanbul one became an Ottomanist, for instance, but no longer a scholar of Islamics as such.

All this, then, reinforced the Arabistic and philologistic prejudices which resulted anyway from several European tendencies: the interest in a Semitic ‘race’ (set over against an Indo-European ‘race’ represented by the West) which was expected to illuminate the Semitic Biblical background; the interest in ‘origins’ of supposedly isolable cultural entities, with which nineteenth-century Western scholarship was obsessed; the concern with Mediterranean (and hence largely Arab) Islamdom, as nearest to Europe and most involved with its history; and the philological tendency to learn Arabic as the most essential linguistic resource and to stop there rather than going on seriously to other languages. This Arabistic and philological bias is reflected in book after book and article after article; not least in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, where many entries discuss more the word (usually in its Arabic form even if it is derived, say, from Persian) than the substance; and present data for Egypt and Syria as if for Islamdom as a whole. (For a consideration of the problem of getting past this situation, see the section on usage below.)

Meanwhile, however, other changes had been modifying Western historical scholarship generally, and with it Islamics studies. It is especially in the twentieth century that Islamicists have been going beyond the results of older Muslim scholarship to pose their own questions and derive their own
answers from the documents, now pulled apart as bits of evidence rather than copied as authorities. More slowly, scholars are learning even to get beyond categories derived from the Occident, partly by learning to use with more precision categories used by Islamicate writers themselves, and partly by learning to use relatively neutral categories disciplined by wider studies of world history and of human society and culture generally. This task is as yet far from complete, however, even in the work of the best scholars.

Apart from this, present-day Islamics studies still suffer from the philologism of their past. Their Arabistic bias, with the neglect of the more central Islamicate areas, is only gradually being overcome. (Yet with the dropping of the training in general Semitic studies that Arabists used to have, a great advantage of the old philologism is being undermined: its ability to integrate Arabic with older Semitic—especially Hebrew and Aramaic—studies and sometimes even with older Iranian studies.) Perhaps even more important, Islamics studies have tended to be concerned, above all, with high culture, to the neglect of more local or lower-class social conditions; and within the high culture, to be preoccupied with religious, literary, and political themes, which are most accessible to a philological approach. Hence it is important to point out such journals as *Comparative Studies in Society and History* and *Social and Economic History of the Orient*, which have stressed other sides, and in both of which Gustave von Grunebaum has taken a leading role in encouraging a good contribution to Islamics studies. Claude Cahen has been the most effective Occidental writer on social and economic questions in many dispersed articles, to be traced down through the *Index Islamicus*.

I will here illustrate the problems that arise from too great a reliance on a philological outlook by way of offering some caveats on the work of scholars on the period immediately before and after the rise of Islam, when lack of broadly based data encourages an unhistorical use of what there is.

The special role of old Arab families has given rise (in combination with certain more extraneous circumstances) to a tendency on the part of many scholars to interpret the development of Islamicate civilization from an Arab, even an Arabian point of view. Identifying 'Islamic culture' as 'culture appearing in the Arabic language', they will treat all pre-Islamic Arabian elements (i.e., those found in the Arabian peninsula) as native to Islamic culture, and will think of an Arabian Bedouin folkway as 'lost' or 'dropped' if it is not found among later Muslims in the Fertile Crescent. Correspondingly, they will treat Syriac, Persian, or Greek cultural elements as 'foreign' imports into Muslim Arab life, despite the fact that they formed the ancestral traditions of most of the Muslim population, and even of most of the educated and culturally privileged section of that population. The term 'pre-Islamic' for some scholars means strictly 'pre-Islamic Arabian', not pre-Islamic from Nile to Oxus generally wherever Islam was established.

When one focuses attention, as one often must, on the Arab Muslims
and especially on the creatively concerned minority among them, this standpoint is largely relevant; for from the standpoint of the ruling Arabs, and even of their more ardent converts, everything non-Arabian was ‘foreign’. What the observer might call the Arabs’ gradual assimilation into the established cultural patterns among which they came to live appeared to the Arabs, rather, as a gradual assimilation of external cultural elements into an on-going essentially Arab society. It is a legitimate question, how such non-Arabian elements were assimilated among Arab families.

But if one is to understand the larger scene in terms of which even the concerned men of old-Arabian family were working, this Arab-centred or ‘Arabistic’ viewpoint can be misleading. Unfortunately, this Arabistic approach has, in fact, often been carried too far by philologists, for whom the language group (in this case, Arabic) is the key unit of all historical study, and for whom the origin of terms is occasionally more fascinating, or at least more accessible, than the origin of the actual institutions to which they are applied. In fact, this approach may be called the conventional one; it has often imposed its terminology even on those who might otherwise be relatively free of it. Yet if not balanced with other points of view, the Arabistic viewpoint can put developments into a false light, arousing false expectations and raising false questions. The reader of studies in the field must be ever on guard against being misled in this way; the Arabistic bias in studies of early Islam has been remarkably hard for even the best scholars to get past.

For instance, if comparisons of conditions before and conditions after the advent of Islam are made between pre-Islamic Arabia on the one hand and Syria or Iran in Islamic times on the other, they can be revealing of what happened to those families that formed the Arabian element in the new Islamic societies. But since those families had undergone not merely Islam but also a major migration and a great rise in social status, any comparison may not tell much about Islam itself or its culture, unless it is balanced with comparisons between pre-Islamic Syria, say, and Syria under Islam; and between pre-Islamic Arabia and Arabia itself in Islamic times. Otherwise, differences may appear to result from Islam which are matters of politics and of geography. Yet such balancing has rarely occurred in published work.

To such a philological bias is often added the old unexamined assumption of identity among the three ethnic criteria: patrilineal race, language, and cultural heritage. ‘Arabs’ by language and ‘Muslims’ by heritage are often identified, even at much later historical periods, as almost a single category, in which Arabian ‘race’ is thought of as normal, even though it is acknowledged that the ‘exceptions’ have been far more numerous than the ‘normal’ cases, such ‘exceptions’ being duly noted as such. At this point, historical inquiry can be seriously thrown off. Writers are to be found, for instance, asking how Greek elements entered (as non-Arabian) from
'outside' not merely into a few Arab families but into the whole Arabic-using society from Nile to Oxus, in which (in fact) they were already present by inheritance; while the same writers fail to inquire how such elements were avoided for so long in the education of upper-class Muslims. This latter question in turn leads to the wider and more serious question (which too purely philological a scholar will scarcely know how to set about asking), how the Arabic language and with it so much of the Arabian background managed to emerge as a cultural framework in a society where they were so greatly disadvantaged. How did Arabian foreign elements—alien at several points even to Islam itself as conceived by Muḥammad—come to receive such relatively ready acceptance among the Semitic and Iranian peoples?

The answer partly lies in the development of those peoples themselves. The Islamicate civilization may be seen as the latest phase of the Irano-Semitic culture which goes back, in the lands from Nile to Oxus, to Sumerian times. The very vision of Islam grew out of that heritage; even the mercantile-nomad understanding which led to the Arab conquest was not entirely alien to it. Islam as an Arab creation was able to come to flower in those wider lands because it answered to circumstances that were already determinative there. The Irano-Semitic cultural traditions showed a long-term tendency, within what remained overall an agrarian-based cultural context, to shift from a more agrarian base for high culture toward a more mercantile base for it. What was distinctive in Islamicate civilization grew largely from the special role in it of traditions linked to the mercantile classes. It brought to culmination what had long been developing.

The antidote to the Arabistic bias ought to lie in marshalling the data on the rest of the society other than the few Arabian families. But unfortunately, this has not proved easy. The few ambitious attempts to do it, moreover, have themselves suffered from a philological approach in a different form.

Sāsānian religious and social history must be reconstructed from archaeological and indirect textual sources, with very few major literary witnesses from the period itself. Aramaic, Greek, or Armenian texts view affairs largely from the outside and marginally. The Pahlavi texts are often suspect as having been edited, at least, in Islamic times, or they must even be reconstructed from Arabic and Persian translations and adaptations. Even when we do have undoubted Pahlavi texts from Sāsānian times, the original script was so tricky and the manuscript tradition has been so defective that reading the texts must be left to philological specialists. In consequence, few scholars have entered the field and those who have been tempted to indulge in rather wild philological speculation, building much on shreds of verbal detail. Since Arthur Christensen's work, for instance, two of the most spectacular writers have been Robert Zehner (notably, Zurvan, a
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Zoroastrian Dilemma [Oxford, 1955], and Franz Altheim, who summarizes in Utopie und Wirtschaft: eine geschichtliche Betrachtung (Frankfurt/Main, 1957) the more questionable results of his more detailed work (with Ruth Stiehl), Ein asiatischer Staat: Feudalismus unter den Sasaniden und ihren Nachbarn (Wiesbaden, 1954). Both illustrate the pitfalls of philological limitations even in their excellences.

Zaehner's work is very informative in detail and suggestive in some correlations, yet he needs to point out the difference between a verbal formulation and its existential, experiential meaning in real life between the doctrine of a religion and the mood of a poem. Consequently, his description of the evolution of Zervanism, which seems to have been a Mazdean school of thought which did not survive, is unconvincing in detail, for one can usually think of less improbable explanations of the particular points. I thus find it unconvincing as a whole. The like tends to be true of his work in Islamics studies, where he takes a few schematic notions and builds a whole typology of faith on the presence or absence of them in the verbal formulations of a given thinker.

Altheim's work is likewise informative and often suggestive; but here again far too much is built on single reconstructions of textual passages, while human probability is flaunted. Nūshirvān's tax measures on the surface, as Altheim points out, generalized taxation in money rather than in kind and therefore suggest an increasing strength in the monetary and mercantile aspects of the economy. But by a series of ingenious and most improbable correlations, Altheim finds, even in this, evidence for the reverse: Nūshirvān's taxation was introducing control of the economy rather than mercantile market freedom; his lesser dependence on the traditional landed gentry likewise meant closer controls of the society, and—by creating a new lesser gentry—put the central government in more immediate dependence on the land. The whole, Altheim maintains (by way of weak evidence on castle building and anachronistic misconstruction of Muhammad's work), led to strengthening of the non-monetary 'natural' economy and so (by interaction with Byzantium) to the Middle Ages. At almost every point, a more adequate awareness of post-Axial agrarianate-level social conditions as such would have suggested better alternative interpretations.

Both Zaehner's and Altheim's systems make such sense as they do by incorporating certain uncriticized preconceptions about world history which allow them to overlook alternative possibilities in their philological reconstructions. Zaehner speaks, without a word of apology, of a Zoroastrian 'church', of 'orthodoxy', of 'sects' of which he takes for granted his Zervanism must be one, though he gives no grounds for supposing that such phenomena, in the sense he presupposes, were in fact present in that period. Altheim, correspondingly, takes for granted the underlying stereotypes of 'Orient' and of 'Middle Ages', without which his scheme would
have no plausibility. His 'Orient' or 'East' is an eternal entity, from ancient times down to the present Soviet Union, always basically backward and irrational but capable of learning from the essentially rational and progressive 'West' and of learning so well as to force or drag the latter into a Dark Age. For him, Mazdak was an ancient Marx, the forerunner of Islam as was Marx of the Soviet system. This parallelism is again made easier by a stereotype: it has become conventional to refer to Mazdak and other reformers as 'communistic', advocating 'community' of property and of women. This terminology Altheim continues to use although he himself makes it clear enough that neither community of property nor community of women was involved, but rather their redistribution, in certain cases, to other private individuals. He seems never to have thought through these various stereotypes to consider what their meaning could really be. Such confusion as to basic historical categories plagues Islamics studies all through, but is nowhere so clear cut (or so disastrous) as in the Sasanian period. The general scholar is forced, even more than in the Islamic periods, to reconstruct by educated guesswork for want of adequately grounded scholarly guidance.

**Usage: Revisionism in Scholarly Terminology**

If one must consciously choose and face the implications of one's approach to a civilization, so must one also choose and face the implications of one's terms, selecting them relevant to the questions one is asking. In using such words as 'Oikoumene' and 'Axial Age', 'Islamdom' and 'Islamicate', I have preferred to introduce new usages or adopt relatively rare ones rather than use terminology now conventional. I have done this with reluctance, recognizing that the historian, like the philosopher, has a special obligation to be intelligible to the layman because of the human immediacy of the questions he is dealing with. Nevertheless, some special terms and usages are necessary. In many disciplines, scholars would not dream of taking their terminology from the street. Even if they do not fully succeed in agreeing upon a given set of terms, they recognize that it is essential for each writer to use his terms with precision, and that an attempt to accommodate oneself to popular usage as reflected in a dictionary must be disastrous. Too often, historians (especially in the field of Islamics) still try to avoid recognizing such a necessity and are satisfied to be guided by whatever is 'common practice'. They note that often terminological discussion can descend into pettifogging, and that the nature of their field prevents historians from building up a single total body of terminology in which all cases are provided for. They hope, therefore, that terminology will take care of itself; but it does not. The responsibility remains for selecting minimally misleading terms and for defining them precisely.

Terms are the units by which one constructs one's propositions. The
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terms one uses determine the categories by which one orders a field—or at least all those categories that are not the immediate focus of one's inquiry. The categories one presupposes, then, necessarily delimit the questions one can ask—at least all the constants implied in the questions, apart (again) from the special point of focus. The questions posed, in turn, determine what answers will ultimately be reached when the questions, as posed, are pursued. The story of scholarly error is largely one of questions wrongly put because their presuppositions were wrong; correspondingly, the story of scholarly achievement can almost be summed up in successive refinements of terminology.

There are two approaches to conventional misusages: the admonitionist approach and the revisionist. The admonitionists, admitting a given usage or practice is misleading, prefer to maintain the continuity of communication which even false conventions make possible, but to add a warning that such and such a usage or categorization must not be taken in the most likely way. The revisionists prefer to replace outright the conventional misusage (or biased categorization) with a sounder one.

Those who have not had time to verify that the conventional error is as unmitigated as the revisionists claim, or that the offered replacements are not themselves tainted with unanticipated further error, almost necessarily incline to wait and meanwhile have recourse to a caveat. But even some who grant that the revisionist point is quite sound may feel that the advantages of change do not outweigh the disadvantages which come with any break with continuity.

As will appear especially from my defence of the term 'Islamicate', in the section below on usage in Islamics studies, in this work I have been insistently and almost without exception revisionist where I saw occasion arise. Whatever concessions need to be made, I feel that the categories and terms arising from the Arabistic bias in particular need drastic revision. But there are other cases where conventional misusages tend to reinforce natural misconceptions. For instance, to put 'land assignment' (or 'land grant' in some situations, perhaps) in place of the usual term 'fief' in the conventional discussions of what is admittedly miscalled 'Islamic feudalism' will usually have one of two effects. Where the discussion happens to be sound, the change throws the points being made into sharper relief—and often makes many of the clarifications prove superfluous. But remarkably often it shows up inadequacies and even absurdities in the conventional discussion and its presuppositions. In the latter case, to hide from the consequences of a more accurate usage, on the grounds of convention, does not serve good scholarship.

The most common conventional errors tend to be bias-reinforcing errors, which is, perhaps, just why they are clung to. With such errors, human nature is such that a caveat does very little good. It is more than the divided human attention can do to keep in mind a caveat that runs against one's
favourite presuppositions if those presuppositions are constantly reinforced by the very terms one uses. In such a case, new terms and new practices alone can take effect; the old, even amended, cannot usually transcend themselves. In any case, in Islamics studies and in civilization studies generally, the inadequacy of our studies up to this point is so great that an attempt to maintain continuity is doomed to failure: we are still almost in the 'pre-historic' period of scholarship. Continuity with old first approximations is bound to be of minimal value.

In fact, historians have already used some care in glaring cases. In the field of Islamics we have got rid almost altogether of 'Moorish' and 'Turanian' and 'Saracen' among specialists because each of these terms had come to carry, as a category, implications too hopelessly confused for reform to seem worthwhile. But far more debris remains to be cleared away. For instance, in the case of terms for areas, European historians would not think of analyzing past conditions in terms of current political boundaries, positing a historic Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Belgium, and France in their mid-twentieth-century limits; yet many Islamicists try to discuss past periods in terms of 'Persia', 'Afghanistan', 'Syria and Palestine', and even 'Lebanon', all of which refer to strictly modern entities, at least in the meaning usually assigned them. We must face the fact that such terminology will not do. It will not do in discussing particular historical events where, fortunately, it is often possible to refer to territorial states of the time. But it will also not do when describing long-term developments and trends in given areas, for current boundaries rarely set off areas with any such inherent unity as will allow for useful discussion. We must reconcile ourselves to using area terms based not on the political situation of any period, but on more enduring criteria relevant to the discussions at hand.

To take one unusually illustrative example, the coastlands between the Mediterranean and the Syrian desert shared much in common and often need to be referred to as a body. If we do not use the term 'Syria' for that area—including what is currently Lebanon, and Palestine in its old, largest definition, but excluding the eastern parts of what (by French fiat) is now the Syrian republic—we must invent some other term. Most writers recognize this fact, but—accepting current political usage of terms as preemptive—try to express themselves somehow by means of them. First off, though, the name 'Israel' cannot be used in any designation because of current implied connotations. Even a periphrasis in 'Syria including Lebanon and Palestine', however, is not only too clumsy but inaccurate, since it does not exclude enough. The compound 'Syria and Palestine', tacitly including current Lebanon in 'Syria' (since on the interwar maps they were both coloured French) is a formation not purely political in inspiration. Partly it reflects Western sentiment about the special place of Palestine, which was to be set apart from the rest of Syria; but in net effect it amounts to
an interwar compromise which exaggerates the place of southern Syria in
the Islamicate scene without satisfying those who go purely by today’s
political map. Hence some decide to degrade the old term ‘Levant’ to mean
only this smaller area; but then we will have to provide somehow for the
wider usage which ‘Levant’ used to serve; and in any case we will be
faced by French restriction of ‘Levant’ still further to cover just the two
states under French mandatory control. Such yielding to current political
and sentimental fashions in the end usually leads nowhere. Sometimes
political fiat and the language of the street must simply be defied and
terms be used on the basis of historical needs alone. In this case, unless
some other term can be found which the politicians will not proceed to steal,
it seems best to continue to use the term ‘Syria’ in the old sense it most often
had before 1918, which happens to be just the sense we need. We may indeed
concede ‘geographical Syria’ or ‘the Syrian lands’ or the like for the noun,
as avoiding a clash; but the adjective anyway must remain ‘Syrian’.
The reader must be told to adjust himself! In other cases, special terms must
be invented. Sometimes I have had recourse to adding the article, where
an original Arabic article has made it appropriate, to indicate reference
to a geographic area rather than a modern state; e.g., ‘the Iraq’ for the
more southerly part of the current Iraqi state. But here, as with phrases
in ‘lands’ or ‘area’, there is no help for the adjective.

**Usage in World-Historical Studies**

In the broad field of world history, the terminology of the street is especially
misleading, for it reflects consistently a strongly ethnocentric Western
view, radically distortive of the reality. The major terms for area and
period will suffice as illustrations. The periodization in ‘Ancient’, ‘Medieval’,
and ‘Modern’ has been attacked by innumerable historians as inadequate
for a fair long-run view even of European history; and while it is sufficiently
vague so that at least the second and third terms seem adjustable to any
area, yet overall it is still more distortive of the world scene than of the
European. Far worse is the geographical terminology. ‘Europe’, ‘Asia’, and
‘Africa’ referred initially to the north, east, and south hinterlands of the
Mediterranean. When the sub-Saharan region is lumped with the southern
littoral of the Mediterranean, and everything east as far as China and Japan
with the Levant, the resulting monstrosities would look like bad jokes were
they not made use of every day (even for statistical purposes) as if they
were real entities with real characteristics of their own. As it is, they are
vicious historical distortions. ‘Europe’, if taken loosely, is a more defensible
concept; yet attempts to trace an eastern ‘boundary’ for Europe through
the Aegean (the two sides of which have always had basically the same
cultural and historical features) and along the Urals (which have never
once served as either a political or a cultural boundary) would also be
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easily dismissible were they not taken seriously and even inscribed on popular maps.

The reason such terms persist, of course, is that on one level they do serve a use. In the case of 'Europe' and 'Asia', at least, the artificial elevation of the European peninsula to the status of a continent, equal in dignity to the rest of Eurasia combined, serves to reinforce the natural notion, shared by Europeans and their overseas descendants, that they have formed at least half of the main theatre (Eurasia) of world history, and, of course, the more significant half. Only on the basis of such categorization has it been possible to maintain for so long among Westerners the illusion that the 'mainstream' of world history ran through Europe. (The acceptance of such terms by non-Westerners too is a sign of their continuing cultural dependence on the West.) The other major pair of popular world-historical conceptions, 'West' and 'East' (or 'Orient') form a variant on the pair 'Europe' and 'Asia' and serve the same function of reinforcing Western ethnocentric illusions.

It is, of course, precisely because of this strongly emotive unconscious function that the careful pre-Modernist historian, at least, should never use the concepts 'Asia' or 'Orient' but should refer precisely to the more limited area he actually has in mind (the area is always in fact more limited, if he is not just indulging in uncritical generalizations). But unfortunately it is often just historians who have been misled most drastically into false statements because they take those categories seriously. The key point is to say what one means: 'Semitic', 'Islamicate', 'Indic', 'Indic and related', 'Far Eastern', perhaps sometimes 'Indic and Far Eastern'; or else 'exotic', 'alien to the Occident', 'non-Western', perhaps 'Islamic and Monsoon Asian', 'non-Western civilized'; or else 'indigenous', 'local', 'non-technicalized', or just 'other'? Even in the Modern period, when the non-Western citied lands have had something in common precisely in not being 'Western', the terms 'Orient' and 'East' have connotations sufficiently unfortunate in several ways to make them suspect, though I find the term 'West' useful in the Modern period for all those on the 'European' side of the development gap.

My world-historical terminology is made clear, for the most part, as I go along. Many of the terms or phrases I use in a distinctive sense are also listed in the Index or the Glossary. Here I can explain a few choices.

The Occident is for me precisely western or Latin Europe and its overseas settlements. If I mention the 'European region', it is with reference to the extended northern hinterland of the Mediterranean, including the Anatolian peninsula; if, especially in compounds, I use 'Europe' for short, in a pre-Modern context, at least, I have in mind the same region. In a Modern context I may use it for European Christendom instead. The term 'Indic region' likewise seems safer, when convenient, than just 'India' for the areas southward of the Pamirs and Himalayas; and it is less pretentious
than the politically retroactive 'Indo-Pakistan subcontinent'. The (Eurasian) 'Far East' I use for the area of primary Chinese cultural influence—including (for instance) Vietnam but not Cambodia. I have chosen the term 'Oikoumene', in a sense similar to that latterly used by Alfred Kroeber not just as an area term but to refer to the Afro-Eurasian agrarian historical complex as having a distinctive interregional articulation in an ever growing area; there seems to be no other term for this complex at all. (The form 'Oikoumene' allows better than 'Ecumene' for an adjectival form distinct from 'ecumenical'.) The term 'cited society' (i.e., containing cities, as distinct from 'urban' which refers to the cities themselves) has the advantage over 'civilized' of avoiding, in certain contexts, any invidious implication of degrees of refinement of manners; for most purposes it suffices without further modifiers. The term 'agrarianate' (cf. note 3 in chapter 1 of Book One) has the advantage over phrases like 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' of being distinctly set off, as well from Modern technicalistic as from pre-agricultural society. The single antithesis 'traditional-modern' not only oversimplifies historically what is chosen as a contrast to 'Modern' but underplays the dynamic nature of what is commonly thought of as tradition, and it definitely ignores the active role of 'tradition' in the most Modern society. The articulation of the long 'Agrarian Age' from Sumer to the French Revolution as pre-Axial, Axial, and post-Axial suits most general purposes for which terms like 'Medieval' would serve and gets round the question whether to include the world-historical period from Columbus to the French Revolution under the label 'Medieval', since from a world viewpoint it is undeniably still post-Axial Agrarian, though within the Occident it initiates Modernity. The important though shorter periods required within the post-Axial, such as the age of the dominance of the confessional faiths, can be referred to ad hoc.

**Modern**

Various terms are now used in referring to the distinctive complex of cultural traits that have played a decisive role in human society since about the generation of 1789. Most of such terms are appropriate in one context or another. A first set of terms depends on the recentness of these traits and on the fact that they do not remain constant, but must always be brought further up to date. The age characterized by these traits (together with that period which, within the Occident, can be regarded as leading up to them) is usually called 'Modern'; the traits can be summed up as 'Modernity', and adoption of them, as 'Modernizing'. A second set of terms refers to the high degree of economic exploitation of resources which is also a fundamental characteristic. A society lacking the traits in question is called 'undeveloped' or 'underdeveloped' and the acquisition of such traits is called 'development', which properly should refer strictly to technical
development as applied to exploitation of resources, but can be generalized to all the necessarily related traits. A third set of terms has a more precise application. Because a key trait is technical rationality in the sense of subjecting all behaviour to calculation according to presumably objective ends without interference from arbitrary tradition, the acquisition of the traits generally can be called 'rationalization'. Finally, some refer to acquisition of the traits in question as 'Westernization' because they were first developed in western Europe, and because acquisition of them appears to make any group seem like western Europeans.

In this study, usage on this point needs to be more effectively differentiated than is customary. Use of the term 'modern' commonly presupposes use of the term 'traditional' as a lumping term for all social forms not characterized by the given complex of traits. This latter usage is very unfortunate in as much as within the 'non-Modern' social forms there are often important distinctions between what is and is not traditional, even in the sense of the term—i.e., immemorially customary—intended by those who use it. For instance, there has been a dynamic distinction between the Shari'ah of the textualistic hadith-minded 'ulama', always fighting popular ways, and more 'traditional' custom which tended to continue popular ways; and such a distinction may be of crucial import just in the present context. Again, common current usage can result in calling 'traditional' certain political or economic patterns that are clearly not characteristic of a 'Modern' form of society in our special sense, but which may have developed only in the nineteenth century and in response to the presence of 'Modern' conditions in the environment. Such usage invites confusion on a very crucial aspect of the history of our times by confounding these latter-day intrusions or expedients with more genuinely 'traditional' traits. But even the term 'Modern', though useful in many contexts where it happens to be unambiguous, is not satisfactory as a precise technical term for the traits in question, if only because it is so often necessary to distinguish between what is up to date and what is out of date at any given point within the process of Modern change. Though in this work I do sometimes use 'Modern' (capitalized) to refer to what more properly I call 'technicalistic' or 'of the Technical Age', yet it seems best as far as possible to retain 'modern' for the up-to-date as such, using it in a more epochal sense ideally only when it contains just that specific element of relativity and even of normative implications—in other words, the element, indeed, normally implied in the word.

Terms like 'development', 'rationalization', and 'industrialization' (which likewise are occasionally used loosely to cover the whole wider process) also will better be restricted to their more precise meanings—that is, respectively, technical development of whatever degree, technical rationalization, and the preponderance, over other sectors of the economy, of technically developed industry. The first two terms, technical 'development' in some
degree, and 'rationalization', can then usefully refer not only to phases within technicalism but even to isolated situations of a very pre-Modern date, not organically related to the complex of Modern times at all. As to 'Westernization', the broad use of such a term implies a *parti pris* on the question—crucially open for us—of how much the complex of traits in question may be dissociable from the rest of Western culture, in particular from the pre-modern Occidental cultural heritage. I prefer to restrict the term to an explicit adoption of Western traits as *Western* rather than simply as Modern.

*Technicalistic, Technical Age*

I prefer to use special variants on the root 'technical' when it is important to be precise. The term 'technicalized', corresponding to 'industrialized' but applicable to technical development not only in manufacturing but in agriculture, administration, science, and so on, will suffer neither semantic loss nor serious obscurity if it is used to characterize the several sectors or the whole of a society in which the dominant elements are on a level of social organization where in intellectual and practical activity, calculatively rationalized and specialized technical procedures form an interdependent and preponderant pattern. Denmark, which may not be primarily industrialized as a society, is highly technicalized in this sense. Then I shall use the word 'technicalistic' to refer to patterns of thought or activity appropriate to or functionally associated with technicalized processes.

Just as the term 'agrarianistic' cannot safely be used of all developments which characterized the agrarianistic societies, so the terms 'technicalization' and 'technicalism' will not exhaust all the traits legitimately associable with Modern times. Above all, certain moral qualities which may have been necessary to launch technicalization in the first place, or the cultivation of which may be facilitated by its presence and consequences, cannot be subsumed under 'technicalism'. I prefer cautiously to refer to them as typical of or associated with the *age* of technicalism, the period since technicalistic patterns became crucially dominant in the world at large. The period thus comes after the generation during which technicalization came into full effect in at least some aspects of some west European societies with the Industrial (1785) and the French (1789) Revolutions, which was also the generation of the establishment of European world hegemony. For convenience I call this succeeding age (down at least to the present) the 'Technical Age', since an age can be named merely for a dominant feature and no one is likely to find the term misleading in this brief form. As a term for an age it refers to the time-period the world over, whether any given land was actually being technicalized then or was merely suffering (or even fortunately escaping) the backwash effects of technicalization elsewhere. Correspondingly, when I use the term pre-Technical, it refers generally to
the time-periods that precede the Technical Age; it does not refer to non-technicalized, or technically underdeveloped, countries or sectors within the Technical Age. This allows me, as the less precisely used ‘Modern Age’ and ‘pre-Modern’ would not, to keep in focus the overall historical situation as well as the internal state of development in any given place. It will be obvious that the terminus a quo of the Technical Age is at the same time the terminus ad quem of the Agrarian Age.

West, Occident, Europe

I use the term ‘West’ in discussing conditions of the Technical Age; I do not use it before. I must distinguish it from my use of the terms ‘Europe’ and ‘Occident’.

The term ‘West’ is often very loosely used, even if not quite so misleading as the term ‘East’. It can cover at least five different historical groupings of lands and peoples. All too often a statement proper to one of these groupings is taken implicitly as applying to another, with consequent confusion. (The confusion usually occurs in tendentious ways.) ‘West’ refers (1) originally and properly to the western or Latin-using half of the Roman empire; that is, to the west Mediterranean lands. By extension, (2) it can refer to the west European lands generally, more precisely to the western or Latin Christian countries north of the Mediterranean (in the Middle Ages and since) which traced their heritage back to the Roman empire. In this usage it will normally exclude those west Mediterranean lands which turned Muslim. By a further extension, (3) the overseas settlements of the west European peoples anywhere, in the Americas and the Antipodes, can be included. It is in these latter two senses that the term ‘Occident’ is used in this work: to designate the peoples of Western (originally Latin) Christendom, including in more modern times their overseas settlements. (The term ‘Occident’ is less popularly used in English and so has some chance of being captured for a precise purpose.) The term ‘West’ is also sometimes used (4) for all European Christendom, usually including all the peoples of European origin (both in the European region and in their extra-European settlements); that is, both the original west Europeans and the east Europeans from whom the term ‘west’ originally distinguished them. It is by a curious extension of this usage that selected portions of ancient Greek history are commonly included (retroactively) in a ‘Western’ history which otherwise is chiefly only Occidental in the narrower sense (so that the Merovingians and not the Byzantines are made to appear as ‘Western’, with the consequent implication of being heirs of ancient Greece!). For such purposes, the terms ‘European’ or ‘Christian European’ are more appropriate, at least for the period before the Technical Age, when extra-European settlers were still obviously Europeans. But for the strictly Modern period, I use the term ‘Western’ for this purpose so as to include
unequivocally the extra-European settlers. Finally, (5) sometimes all Afro-Eurasian civilized lands west of the Indus may be included, that is, roughly both Europe and the Middle East; for such a purpose, 'west Eurasian' or 'Irano-Mediterranean' is preferable.

The term 'Europe', in contrast to the term 'West', has come to have a specious exactitude, referring to the most westerly peninsula of Eurasia, with the associated islands and an arbitrarily designated part of their continental hinterland, usually bounded at the Urals. This precise area, however, has at no time ever formed a cultural or political entity to any degree at all. I have used the vaguer term 'European region' or 'European lands' to cover an area similar to this but forming at least in pre-Modern periods a historically truer grouping: the lands north of the Mediterranean (from Anatolia to Spain) with their hinterland northward (including into the Russian plains), and without always excluding such related lands as the Maghrib. The term 'Europe' then can take on a more usefully precise political and social meaning only in Modern times, when it refers to the west European stages plus those east European states that had assimilated to them; i.e., until recently, the Christian states.

Accordingly, in Book Six, I still use 'Occident' to refer to the ex-Latin Europeans and their overseas settlers, and 'European' in the general regional sense of the lands north of the Mediterranean. But I also use 'Western' to refer to all European Christendom and its extra-European extensions, and 'Europe', in a political sense, to refer to the Christian European states and their organizations.

Yet another recent usage of 'West' comes back to a west-east division within Europe, but rather different from the old one: the 'East' is the Communist bloc, and the 'West' then becomes the non-Communist Western bloc. In a general historical context it will be easy to refer to 'Western-bloc' powers when this is intended.

'East Roman empire', 'Byzantine'

After the capital of the Roman empire was finally settled in Constantinople (following a period when Rome, in any case, had not been the actual capital), many authors call the empire 'East Roman' or 'Byzantine'. The term 'Byzantine' becomes useful at least to distinguish the ruling classes, though it is most appropriate only after the Arab conquests, when Latin practically disappeared. But the term 'East Roman' can be misleading in a more general historical perspective. It does not happen to refer, like 'Eastern Han', to the shift of the capital from a western to an eastern location; rather it refers to the frequent appointment, during more than a century, until 480, of an autonomous co-emperor in the western provinces. This used to be misconstrued as marking the creation of two contemporaneous empires, an 'East Roman' and a 'West Roman'. The 'West Roman' was then tacitly
identified with the Roman empire proper—partly because it included the original Roman territories, but more because the historians, as west Europeans, were chiefly interested in the western provinces.

Accordingly, when during the fifth century most of the western provinces temporarily escaped imperial control, never to be fully reconstituted as a group, this was thought of as the 'fall of the Roman empire' (dated specifically in 476, a date poorly chosen in any case). And, in fact, Gaul and Britain, on whose history most Western historians have tended to centre, were not reoccupied; so the imperial power does end locally there in the fifth century. Thereafter by such scholars the continuing main body of the Roman empire has been called the 'East Roman empire' and has been thought of as distinct from the 'Roman empire' proper; so that even the re-establishment of imperial authority in the more important of the western provinces in the sixth century has sometimes been thought of not as a restoration but as an expansion of a different empire—'the East Roman empire at its largest extent'. Commonly used historical atlases so label their maps. But we must be continually reminded that Gaul and Britain were marginal to the empire as such, and the whole western half of the empire was in most ways less important than the eastern half. From the viewpoint of the society and culture of the empire as a whole, there was no beginning 'division' into east and west, and the major transitions come not in the fifth but in the third and the seventh centuries. To refer to the later undivided empire as 'East Roman' is to retroject Occidental independence into too early a past and to obscure the continuity of the empire as a whole. It can confuse our sense of the Roman heritage in the Mediterranean basin as it confronted the first Muslims, as well as distort our sense of the early relations between Islamdom and the Occident.

The Westernizing world-map projections and atlases

The Muslims in ages past had an image of the world noticeably more balanced than that of the west Europeans. Maps in certain Western history books labelled 'the known world' represent, of course, not the world as known in more advanced and cosmopolitan centres, but as known to the literate public of western Europe. Given the peripheral location of the European peninsula, the Occidentals' image of the world might be expected to have been eccentric. Their division of the old world was not into seven parts, as was the Muslims', but into only three, centred on the Mediterranean Sea (the lands north of it were Europe; those south of it, Africa; those east of it, Asia). Such a distribution was naturally totally inappropriate to the hemisphere as a whole.

Yet it did serve admirably to set off the little European peninsula as a unit comparable to the great land masses. The Medieval ethnocentric classification was preserved and subsequently written into the modern Western
map of the world, just as was the equally ethnocentric conception ‘Orient’. Its absurdity was disguised by the increasingly widespread use of a drastically visually distortive world map, the Mercator projection, which by exaggerating northward manages to make an artificially bounded ‘Europe’ look larger than all ‘Africa’, and quite dwarf that other Eurasian peninsula, India. In this way all the ‘well-known’ cities of Europe can be included, while the unfamiliar cities of India can be omitted. When the Mercator projection is decried for distorting Greenland—as if Greenland mattered so much—map-makers can resort to a remarkable compromise: a projection like Van der Grinten’s preserves the basic ethnocentric distortion, continuing to exaggerate Europe at the expense of the other main historical cultural centres, but without exaggerating so much the barren far north. Even in historical atlases, maps of the world tend to be visually distortive, and they almost invariably place the Atlantic and Europe in the centre. In our day, such maps, putting the White men’s lands on so much larger a scale and in so much more prominent a position than the Coloured men’s lands, may fittingly be called ‘Jim-Crow’ world maps. But the idea is much older than modern racialism. Such maps represent visually how pre-Modern yet continuing popular notions can persist into even Modern scholarly usage.

The disastrous effect that distortive map images can have has been recognized in modern military thinking, where the Second World War forced at least airmen to use ‘global’ maps so as to think imaginatively. Unfortunately, many Islamicists, like other scholars, have unconsciously allowed their physical image of Islamdom to be distorted by the popular maps that are all about them. They continue to be influenced by European-centred ways. Yet Islamicists, at least, could very usefully take their geographical terms and their ‘world image,’ and even their ‘maps of the known world’ from pre-Modern Islamdom. An atlas so oriented would be of great value in reinforcing the proper views presented in carefully written works.

USAGE IN ISLAMICS STUDIES

‘Islamics’, ‘Islamicist’

When the object of a body of studies is people who themselves make studies, it can on occasion be useful to distinguish, in terms, between the studies and their object, which is not done in phrases like ‘Islamic studies’, ‘Islamic scholar’, ‘Chinese studies’, ‘Chinese scholar’, equally used for studies about or by Muslims or Chinese. Hence the use of slightly pretentious terms like ‘Sinology’, ‘Sinologist’, and ‘Islamology’ or ‘Islamics’, and ‘Islamicist’. Though I use the term ‘Islamics’ I feel it does not yet distinguish clearly enough between studies of Islam as such and studies of Islamdom. The hospitality of English for appositional phrases permits constructions at once simpler and more unmistakable: ‘China studies’, ‘China scholars’, ‘Islam studies’, ‘Islamdom studies’, ‘Islamdom scholars’—a form adaptable at will
to any desired delimitation of field. But despite the self-evident clarity of such phrases, I hesitate to introduce them—at least before the term ‘Islamdom’ has established itself.

'Islandom', 'Islamicate'

The use of the unwonted terms ‘Islamdom’ and ‘Islamicate’ requires a more extended defence. I plead that it has been all too common, in modern scholarship, to use the terms 'Islam' and 'Islamic' too casually both for what we may call religion and for the overall society and culture associated historically with the religion. I grant that it is not possible nor, perhaps, even desirable to draw too sharp a line here, for (and not only in Islam) to separate out religion from the rest of life is partly to falsify it. Nevertheless, the society and culture called 'Islamic' in the second sense are not necessarily 'Islamic' in the first. Not only have the groups of people involved in the two cases not always been co-extensive (the culture has not been simply a 'Muslim culture', a culture of Muslims)—much of what even Muslims have done as a part of the 'Islamic' civilization can only be characterized as 'un-Islamic' in the first, the religious sense of the word. One can speak of 'Islamic literature', of 'Islamic art', of 'Islamic philosophy', even of 'Islamic despotism', but in such a sequence one is speaking less and less of something that expresses Islam as a faith.

Accordingly, it should avoid confusion, to distinguish the two current meanings of 'Islam' conceptually by means of distinct terms. If one speaks of 'Islamic law', for instance, one may mean the Shari'ah; but if one is comparing law, as a dimension of cultural life, with 'Islamic' art or literature, one should include the non-Shari'i legal patterns on a level with the 'non-religious' literature and art. Otherwise one gets a false balance. But too rarely is the non-Shari'i law, in fact, included. Without a distinction of terms, such a confusion, which may originate in the chances of what material is available to scholarship, tends to persist unnoticed. Thus there are several studies of 'Islamic international law' which (taking 'Islamic' in the first, narrower, sense) deal with the Shari'i principles of the relation of the caliphate to non-Muslim states. But it seems to have occurred to few to study that other 'Islamic international law', not explicitly religious but characterizing the civilization as such, a law which governed, above all, relations among 'Islamic' states. Yet the latter, and not the Shari'i 'international' law, is what would culturally correspond to most of what we call 'Islamic art', or 'Islamic literature', or 'Islamic science'; and, indeed, to Western 'international law'.

In fact, the need for a distinction is rather urgent. It would be easy to show that not only beginners but even scholars have found themselves falling into outright error because they have not kept the two current senses of the word 'Islam' distinct. A study of 'Medieval Islam' or of 'Modern Islam' may be primarily a study of religion, or it may be a study of an overall culture in
which religion simply takes its place; or it may be a mixture, sections of it differing according to different sources of information. It has happened, for instance, that the same discussion referred to 'Medieval Islam' in a broader cultural sense and to 'Modern Islam' in a more specifically religious sense, and that the fact went unobserved that different discussants, or the same discussant at different times, were referring to different matters in the two cases. The results can be most misleading. Bernard Lewis has suggested that the adjective 'Islamic' be used in the second, the cultural sense, and the adjective 'Muslim' in the first, the religious sense. But it does not appear that this usage will be maintained; and indeed there is some advantage in distinguishing between 'Islamic' as an adjective 'of or pertaining to' Islam as either an idealized or a historical cumulative tradition of faith, and 'Muslim' as an adjective 'of or pertaining to' the Muslims, insofar as they accept that faith—a slight distinction, but sometimes a useful one, and one that comes easily.

I have come to the conclusion that the problem can be solved only by introducing new terms. The term 'Islamdom' will be immediately intelligible by analogy with 'Christendom'. 'Islamdom', then, is the society in which the Muslims and their faith are recognized as prevalent and socially dominant, in one sense or another—a society in which, of course, non-Muslims have always formed an integral, if subordinate, element, as have Jews in Christendom. It does not refer to an area as such, but to a complex of social relations, which, to be sure, is territorially more or less well-defined. It does not, then, duplicate the essentially juridical and territorial term, 'Dār al--Islām'; yet, in contrast to 'Muslim lands', it is clearly collective—frequently an important point. Sometimes the phrase 'the Islamic world' is used much in this sense. I prefer not to use it for three reasons: (a) in compound phrases where 'Islamdom' can be a useful element, the three-word phrase can become clumsy; (b) the phrase itself uses the term 'Islamic' in too broad a sense; (c) it is time we realized there is only 'one world' even in history. If there is to be an 'Islamic world', this can be only in the future.

On the other hand, if the analogy with 'Christendom' is held to, 'Islamdom' does not designate in itself a 'civilization', a specific culture, but only the society that carries that culture. There has been, however, a culture, centred on a lettered tradition, which has been historically distinctive of Islamdom the society, and which has been naturally shared in by both Muslims and non-Muslims who participate at all fully in the society of Islamdom. For this, I have used the adjective 'Islamicate'. I thus restrict the term 'Islam' to the religion of the Muslims, not using that term for the far more general phenomena, the society of Islamdom and its Islamicate cultural traditions.

The noun 'Islamdom' will presumably raise little objection, even if it is little adopted. (I hope, if it is used, it will be used for the milieu of a whole society and not simply for the body of all Muslims, for the Ummah.) At any rate, it is already felt improper, among careful speakers, to refer to some local event as taking place 'in Islam', or to a traveller as going 'to Islam', as
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if Islam were a country. The adjective 'Islamic', correspondingly, must be restricted to 'of or pertaining to' Islam in the proper, the religious, sense, and of this it will be harder to persuade some. When I speak of 'Islamic literature' I am referring only to more or less 'religious' literature, not to secular wine songs, just as when one speaks of Christian literature one does not refer to all the literature produced in Christendom. When I speak of 'Islamic art' I imply some sort of distinction between the architecture of mosques on the one hand, and the miniatures illustrating a medical handbook on the other—even though there is admittedly no sharp boundary between. Unfortunately, there seems to be no adjective in use for the excluded sense—'of or pertaining to' the society and culture of Islamdom. In the case of Western Christendom we have the convenient adjective 'Occidental' (or 'Western'—though this latter term, especially, is too often misused in a vaguely extended sense). 'Occidental' has just the necessary traits that 'West Christian' would exclude. I have been driven to invent a term, 'Islamicate'. It has a double adjectival ending on the analogy of 'Italianate', 'in the Italian style', which refers not to Italy itself directly, not to just whatever is to be called properly Italian, but to something associated typically with Italian style and with the Italian manner. One speaks of 'Italianate' architecture even in England or Turkey. Rather similarly (though I shift the relation a bit), 'Islamicate' would refer not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims.

The pattern of such a double adjectival ending, setting the reference at two removes from the point referred to, is sufficiently uncommon to make me hesitate. But there seems no alternative. In some contexts, but only in some, one can refer without ambiguity to the 'Perso-Arabic' tradition to indicate 'of or pertaining to' Islamdom and its culture, for all the lettered traditions of Islamdom have been grounded in the Arabic or the Persian or both. In other cases, one might use a periphrasis involving the terms 'traditions/culture/society of Islamdom'. One cannot, speaking generally, call Swedish 'a Christian language'; and if one were debarred from calling it an 'Occidental' language, one could not say simply that it is 'a language of Christendom', which might in some contexts seem to imply that it was to at least some extent used throughout that extensive realm; but one might say it is 'a language of the culture of Christendom'. Likewise, it is hardly accurate, despite certain West Pakistani claims, to call Urdu an 'Islamic' language, in the strict sense. (It was the insistence of some Muslims on treating it that way, and opening a meeting on fostering Urdu with Qur'an readings, that drove Urdu-loving Hindus away from it and may, in the end, have meant the ruin of Urdu in its motherland.) If one could not refer to it as 'Islamicate', one could yet say it was a language 'of the culture of Islamdom'. One cannot refer to Maimonides as an Islamic philosopher, but one could say, without being seriously misleading, that he was a philosopher in the Perso-Arabic
tradition or, still better, a writer in the philosophical tradition of Islamdom. But there is a limit to such periphrases. Eventually, it is stylistically less clumsy to use an explicit term. Moreover, such a term may have valuable pedagogical uses, its very presence militating against the confusions which periphrases would avoid in the writer but not necessarily in his readers.

It may be noted that some, not only Arabs and Western Arabists, but latterly even some non-Arab Muslims (for the historical reasons noted elsewhere), might use the term 'Arabic'—especially in such a case as that of Maimonides. But—to take the case of philosophy—this is ruled out because, for one thing, some important representatives of that tradition wrote in Persian. In fields other than scholarship and philosophy—in politics or art, say—the idea becomes even more patently absurd, despite the bias in favour of it among certain scholars. The term 'Arabic' must be reserved for that subculture, within the wider society of Islamdom, in which Arabic was the normal language of literacy; or even, sometimes, to the yet smaller sphere in which Arabic-derived dialects were spoken. Indeed, the Western temptation to use this term with a wider reference springs from historical accidents that have tended falsely to identify 'Arab' and 'Muslim' in any case. To use the term 'Arabic' then, would not only be inaccurate, it would be one of those erroneous usages that reinforce false preconceptions—by far the most mischievous sort of error, as I have noted in the section on historical method above.

'Middle East', 'Nile to Oxus'

For this region I will not usually use the term 'Middle East' but one or another phrase in 'Nile to Oxus'—'from Nile to Oxus' (generally implying inclusively), for instance, or 'between Nile and Oxus' if what is meant is some given spot in or portion of the area; or occasionally 'in the Nile-to-Oxus region'. The term 'Middle East', which seems the best phrase of those more commonly used, has a number of disadvantages. It is, of course, vague, being used for so limited a region as that of the eastern (or even northeastern) Arab lands plus Israel (the presence of the latter is probably the occasion for having recourse to such a vague term for so limited an area); and it has been used for so extensive a region as that stretching from Morocco to Pakistan, and sometimes including a number of Muslim peoples even further afield. It can, of course, be defined at will; but overtones remain, especially overtones implying an Iran of present-day political bounds.

Its principal disadvantage stems from its relatively exact military usage, where it originated. It cuts the Iranian highlands in half—the western half ('Persia') having been assigned to the Mediterranean command, the eastern half ('Afghanistan') to the Indian command. Since the Iranian highlands are of primary importance in the region that is basic to Irano-Semitic and Islamicate history, such a usage is completely unacceptable. Unfortunately,
the military usage as to the eastern limits of coverage has become standard in a great many works using the phrase 'Middle East', and for many readers it comes to imply an area that is, on balance, more westerly than our history requires. Since for Westerners there is anyway a temptation to see everything from the shores of the Mediterranean, the more easterly parts becoming foreshortened as it were, a phrase that has the virtue of explicitly running counter to that temptation is to be preferred.

The phrase 'Nile to Oxus' has the further virtue of being eminently concrete: if one means 'Egypt', say, or 'Egypt and Syria', or some other relatively restricted area (as many do in fact, even when they believe they are using the term 'Middle East' in an inclusive sense) one may hesitate to make too sweeping a generalization if forced to ascribe it explicitly to all the lands from Nile to Oxus.

Another disadvantage of the term 'Middle East' is that it implies it is part of some 'East'—that is, all civilized lands but the Occidental, taken as somehow forming a civilization or a region to which something distinctive may be ascribed, set off as one entity against the 'West' as another. That sort of Western ethnocentrism is discussed in the preceding section on usage in historical studies. The same objection applies to the term 'Near East', which has the further disadvantage of shifting the focus to a yet more westerly zone than 'Middle East' usually does. The absurd phrase 'Near and Middle East', a compromise sometimes used, has the disadvantages of both phrases and the advantages of neither.

From the point of view of the Oikoumene as a whole, 'Middle West' might do, but would anyway not be so immediately intelligible as 'Nile to Oxus'. The phrase 'West Asia' (which seems gratuitously to exclude Egypt from a region where historically it commonly belongs if it belongs to any region beyond itself) has the disadvantage of perpetuating the notion of 'Asia' as a 'continent', a notion that is merely a variant on the Western ethnocentrism of the term 'East'. The Germans commonly use the term 'Orient' for the area from Nile to Oxus. This usage might be both unexceptionable and convenient if only that word did not have far different connotations for English-speaking readers—and also among Germans, to judge by the frequency with which German writers use it in both a strict and an extended sense even in the same discussion.

It will be noted that western Anatolia does not lie between Nile and Oxus, but lies on the contrary along the northern shores of the Mediterranean. This has been its location in all periods, from the time of the ancient Lydians who patronized Delphi to the time of Atatürk.

For the most important complex of cultural traditions in the region from Nile to Oxus, I use the phrase 'Irano-Semitic', which refers to the cultural traditions, both on the folk level and on that of the high culture, rather than to the area as such. The two terms have only for a brief time, if ever, been geographically coextensive, for the area in which the Irano-Semitic culture
prevailed in its various periods steadily expanded. For an explanation of my usage of that phrase, see note 9 in chapter I of Book One.

'Arab'
The term 'Arab', 'arab, as noun and adjective, has been used on at least five levels. (1) It has referred—perhaps originally—expressly to the Bedouin, the nomads and especially the camel nomads of Arabia. (But careful usage has preferred a special term, a'rāb, for them.) This has at times been the commonest usage of the term in Arabic. However, to render the Arabic 'arab in such cases by our 'Arab', as some writers do when translating, is bound to be confusing and is to be avoided. The reader must be on the alert for such a usage in older translations. When a pre-Modern Arabic writer, such as Ibn-Khaldūn, said something uncomplimentary about 'arabs, he was usually speaking only of the Bedouin. (2) Then it has referred to all those claiming descent from or old cultural identification with the Bedouin or their language, including of course the 'settled Bedouin'. In this use, it has historically sometimes had an implication of 'Muslim', since the early Muslims were Arab in rather this sense; but the early jurist Abū-Yūsuf, using it in this sense, included also some Christians and Jews. (3) The next extension was to all those peoples speaking Arabic-derived dialects, whatever their relations to Bedouin traditions or to Islam; in this sense, whole peasant populations can be called Arabs. (However, those among whom the literate have used some other than the standard Arabic alphabet—for instance the Maltese and some other non-Muslim groups, especially Jews—have commonly, but not always, been excluded.) This latter sense is essentially a modern one. In using it in this work I am retrojecting it, for convenience' sake, upon a set of groups which might not have recognized that they formed a common category; it is analogous to having a common term, 'Latins', for all the Romance-speaking peoples. It must not, therefore, be lent any 'national' overtones: in this sense, 'the Arabs' have moved toward forming a nation only recently. However, it is the commonest modern usage and it must be remembered that in this sense the Arabs are mostly neither Bedouin nor tribal; they are, in large majority, peasants, living in villages and closely tied to the land. (4) It has further been used where the normal language of literacy was the classical Arabian, or Muḍari, Arabic—whether the home vernacular was Arabic-derived or quite unrelated. Usually this usage has been restricted to the individual level. Persons who wrote in Arabic but whose own language was Persian or Spanish or Turkish or Kurdish have been included in what is called collectively 'the Arabs'. Where whole peoples have possessed literacy only in Arabic—e.g., the Somalis—this usage has not usually applied. But even at best the usage is very dubious; it is sounder to say something like 'the Arabic writers'. (5) Finally, there are to be found authors who will seem to use the term for all peoples among whom Arabic
is used at least in ritual. This is never done consistently; but it seems to be
the implied definition when a book on the modern Arabs, for instance, in­
cludes, as illustrations of past Arab achievements, pictures of the Taj
Maḥall in India or of illustrations to Persian poetry. Such a usage is thoroughly
confusing and unacceptable.

‘Allāh’

We properly use the same English word for the object of worship of all who
are recognized as monotheists—the various sorts of Christians and Jews, as
well as many persons of other faiths. Normally we leave untranslated a
proper name, such as ‘Zeus’ or ‘Odin’, when we think of the divinity in
question as distinct from (and lesser than) the monotheists’ One God. To
use ‘Allāh’ in English can therefore imply, accordingly, the notion that
Muslims honour something different from what is honoured by Christians and
Jews (and Stoics and Platonists and so forth), and presumably something
imaginary: as if they believed that it was some mythical god called ‘Allāh’,
rather than God, the Creator. This is essentially a dogmatic position and can
be allowed only in those ready to admit its theological implications. Some­
times Muslims writing in English use ‘Allāh’ instead of ‘God’, generally with
a like distinction in mind, but with the implications reversed—implying
more or less consciously that the ‘God’ which Christians and Jews worship
is not really true in the full sense, so that Muslims must be distinguished as
worshipping ‘Allāh’. Sometimes, to be sure, the usage merely reflects an
understandable zeal for the Arabic text of the Qur’an.

On the other hand, in philological and historical contexts it is sometimes
useful to distinguish a particular figure with lineaments envisaged by
particular groups in particular forms. In this case, just as it is sometimes
convenient to refer to ‘Yahweh’ in discussing the early Hebrew conception
of God, so it can be convenient to refer to ‘Allāh’ in corresponding circum­
stances.

‘Ḥadith report’, ‘Tradition’

The term ḥadīth has often been translated ‘tradition’, in the sense of the
Latin traditio, something handed from one to another, used of certain
alleged unwritten laws and teachings in Jewish and Christian theology. When
scholars were Latinists and theologians and when it was considered
proper to interpret an alien culture in terms of one’s own concepts, the
rendering ‘tradition’ was doubtless convenient. Now, however, it is felt to be
important to understand a culture in its own terms. In English, the word
‘tradition’ implies not only a contrast to anything written, but anonymity
and imprecision. The ḥadīth reports, however, are not a matter of vague
custom but of explicit statements, texts, early put into writing; frequently
just contrary to custom; and always naming both the transmitters and the
original source. Since there is also, of course, tradition among Muslims, in
the English sense of the word—and since that tradition is often to be con­
trasted to ḥadith—such a term as ‘narration’ or ‘report’ seems a far more
convenient rendering for ḥadith if the term is to be translated at all. Hence
in this work I refer to ḥadith reports and ḥadith reporters (or transmitters)
where conventionally writers have referred to ‘Traditions’ and ‘Traditionists’;
I refer to the ḥadith corpus where conventional writers have referred to
‘Islamic Tradition’.

A term like ‘report’ is also philologically more accurate, for ḥadith means
‘new’ and then reported ‘news’, ‘narration’ (and finally even ‘conversation’).
Moreover, theologically, the analogy with Christian ‘tradition’ is technically
unsound. In exact usage, the term ḥadith, ‘report’, is explicitly distinguished
from sunnah, sunan, ‘custom(s)’, and from ijmāʿ, ‘consensus’; it is a report
of sunnah. It is the term sunnah that would be more properly compared to the
Christian ‘tradition’—at least sunnah when supported by ijmāʿ, consensus,
whether the sunnah happens to be supported by ḥadith reports or not.

But what matters is not so much the philological accuracy of the rendering
as its scholarly consequences. By using the term ‘report’, I have left the
words ‘tradition’ and ‘traditional’ open for more appropriate uses—which will
sometimes correspond to sunnah in its more general sense (‘living’ tradition,
in the works of Joseph Schacht), but will more often refer to still other cases
of the basic cultural phenomenon described in the Prologue. Thus I can
avoid giving occasion to certain confusions that are too common in the
scholarly literature as it is. Too many writers seem to suppose that Muslim
traditional lore and ḥadith lore, Muslim traditional law and Sharīʿa law, were
the same, or would have been the same if the Muslims in question had been
‘true’ Muslims. Or at least many writers suppose that ḥadith lore and the law
based on it were always ‘traditional’ in some ordinary English sense, even
if they did not form the whole tradition. Often writers will use ‘tradition’ and
‘traditional’ freely in their ordinary sense in the same discussion where they
use these words for ḥadith reports, without specially marking the contrast.
But such ways of thinking and writing make nonsense of all the Sharīʿa
reformers from al-Shāfiʿī to Abd-al-Wahhāb. But these men were all attack­
ing actual Muslim custom and tradition in the name of (often obscure) texts,
nass, which were commonly in fact innovative. They could claim to represent
tradition, in the crucial cases, only in a very tenuous sense even if one grants
them all their presuppositions: that is, in the sense that those few who
followed a lone but exalted precedent, contrary to all custom, were main­
taining the only tradition that really counted. In fact, the ḥadith reporter
was not, as such, a traditionalist but a textualist (or perhaps by intention a
revivalist—in the exact sense of that term) and was often quite as much
opposed to the truly tradition-minded as to any rationalist.

The needless confusion invited by using the term ‘Tradition’ for a report
has been seen by a number of scholars, who have tried to avoid it by capita-
lizing the word when used in its 'technical' sense. This might work if it were not that the confusion is weighted; the usage is one of those insidious mis-usages which reinforce erroneous tendencies already present among us, and which therefore cannot be counteracted with a mere footnote warning. For unfortunately the ḥadith-minded Muslims themselves insisted that the ḥadith reports did represent the only tradition that ought to be valid for a Muslim, and moreover a tradition unbroken from the time of the Prophet himself. Until the work of Ignaz Goldziher, Islamicists tended to believe this without examination; even since his time they have been tempted, as philologians, to look on the ḥadith textualist party among Muslims—the party most easily traceable by philological methods—as in all cases and in all periods the partisans of the 'true' Muslim tradition, in the ordinary sense of that word, even if they acknowledged that some 'traditions' were in fact later than was claimed. This has led them to overlook the anti-traditionalist function of ḥadith reports in forming the early law, and to think of Ḥanbalis and Ṣāḥīrīs, who clung especially to ḥadith reports, miscalled 'traditions', as the most traditionalist—not merely the most textualist—of the schools: a serious misconception. And it has led them, if at all alert, to having to have recourse to needlessly cumbersome excursuses to explain, apropos of Muslim Modernist movements, that ḥadith reports ('Tradition') form only a part of the actual Islamic tradition; that a stress on such reports may or may not indicate what is ordinarily called traditionalism in a man; that, in fact, a strict ḥadith-mindedness, now as ever, may well imply an anti-traditional orientation in several respects.

Practically any discussion involving the role of ḥadith reports will illustrate the potential and often actual confusion that results from using the rendering 'Traditions'. Too often not only the unwary general reader but the scholar himself falls victim. It is true that Islamicists, like other scholars, tend to have their own traditionalism (in the common sense), but scholars know that when a usage is not merely unfortunate but actively misleading, it must be abandoned, however painful the effort to do so and however hallowed the usage is by age.

An example may serve to pinpoint the difficulty. George Makdisi, in an article cited in chapter III of Book Three, shows that the conventional picture of Ash'arism as becoming 'orthodox' in the Earlier Middle Period will not stand up. But he does not escape the conventional picture otherwise, for he identifies traditionalism among early Muslims with adherence to ḥadith reports; and then he finds himself puzzled by his own results in consequence. This picture of Islamic history was almost certainly reinforced by his use of the term 'Tradition' for a ḥadith report; at any rate, his terminology did nothing to alert him to the confusion.

He begins with a remark that it would be only natural—on the basis of general history of religions—to expect (as in the usual scholarly image of Islamic development, based on the Ashʿarī apologists) an early division be-
tween ‘traditionalists’ and ‘rationalists’, which would then be later bridged by a mediating ‘orthodoxy’ (the Ash‘ari kalām). In saying this, he seems to identify the ‘traditionalists’ in the general sense with his ‘Traditionists’, the ḥadīth-reporters and especially the Ahl al-Ḥadīth—and, of course, the ‘rationalists’ with the Mu‘tazilīs (as against the Ash‘arīs).

But, in fact, since both the ‘kalām men’ and the ‘ḥadīth men’ had at first been, in different ways, partly opposed to the living tradition of Marwānī times, to call the ḥadīth men ‘traditionalist’ in any broad sense is to misrepresent them (though, to be sure, it was their own misrepresentation); the Mu‘tazilīs had as good a claim to be called traditionalist, their ‘rationalism’ (in defence of the older tradition) being no more anti-traditional than was the textualism of the ḥadīth men (or than the ‘rationalism’ of the Ash‘arīs). To the extent that the ḥadīth men succeeded in gaining popular support, their subsequent conflict with the kalām men (Mu‘tazilī or Ash‘arī) was a secondary development not to be expected to answer to any universal primitive experience in religious traditions.

Indeed, Makdisi goes on to note that in Islam the pattern he expected to see did not fulfill itself after all. But such an observation loses its point if one gets outside the framework set by the identification of ḥadīth reports with Islamic tradition. Without such an identification, he might have been led to see that what he had to deal with were three, not two, universal types of phenomena in religious history—traditionalism, ‘rationalism’, and textualism (allowing, but only for the moment, the legitimacy of a term like ‘rationalism’ for the argumentative viewpoint of the kalām men). He then might have seen the whole range of Islamic textualism in a different light—which might not have altered his immediate conclusions, but would surely have given them an ultimately different and more fruitful meaning. Avoidance of the term ‘Tradition’ for a ḥadīth report and of ‘Traditionist’ for a reporter would not by itself have led to new insights, but it might have helped avoid taking old misconceptions too much for granted.

‘Sect’, ‘firqah’

The common term used in the pre-Modern Arabic and Persian languages for any grouping of people according to their opinions was firqah. This has been translated ‘sect’, but it rather rarely answers to the modern English notion of ‘sect’. Usually it should be rendered by nothing stronger than ‘school of thought’. Often it is used to refer to a single teacher and his disciples, with reference to one minor point of doctrine. In such a case there is no question of a body of persons sharing a common religious allegiance such that their overall religious life is led among themselves and apart from others, as is implied in a ‘sect’.

The Muslim historians of doctrine always tried to show that all other schools of thought than their own were not only false but, if possible, less
than truly Muslim. Their works describe innumerable 'firqahs' in terms which readily misled modern scholars into supposing they were referring to so many 'heretical sects'. These histories of doctrine have been called, not unfairly, 'heresiographies', which, however, is rather a description of their tendencies than an exact designation of their contents. But to use the word 'sect' wherever a Muslim writer used the word *firqah* produces odd misconceptions. A person could maintain a given viewpoint on the imamate, one on questions of metaphysics or kalām, and one on fiqh law; he could be, for instance, a Jamâ‘ī-Sunnī, a Mu’tazili, and Ḥanafi. Beginners, and (unfortunately) not only beginners, have sometimes been confused as to how so many Ḥanafis, whom he knows to be Sunnis, could belong to the supposedly rival 'sect' of the Mu’tazilah. In so prominent a case the confusion can be relatively easily laid to rest; but the elevation of many less well-known viewpoints on one or another issue into full-blown 'sects' has peopled with strange ghosts the history of Muslim rebellions and urban factions as well as the history of doctrine.

Note that the conventional distinction between 'orthodox' Islam and 'the sects' is at best dubious. For my usage of the terms 'Sunnī' and 'Jamâ‘ī', see the discussion in chapter I of Book Two.

**Note on Translating**

A translation must be judged according to the purposes of the given translator. It is possible to distinguish three usual sorts of translation: re-creative, explanatory, and precise study translations. In bibliographical references I have identified translations accordingly, when necessary.

The translator's purpose may be to re-create a work so as to enrich a second literature with a work having approximately the same effect as the original. Sometimes the effect intended is very close to the original effect, sometimes it is an analogous effect. One may then draw inspiration from such a model without being tied to those features of it that are relevant only within its original setting. Such a translation of poetry will aim to be poetic; with prose, such a translation will be more or less a paraphrase, with one or another degree of 'modernization', if necessary, to make it easily readable. Ideally, this kind of translation should be by someone who is an artist in his own right. If the effect aimed at is something like the original effect, it is possible for a re-creative translation to be useful, even for the scholar, in evoking the elusive flavour of the whole work. But it is necessarily impressionistic in two senses. It gives a calculated impression to a new audience, and it renders only those nuances of the original that the translator wishes the reader to see relevance in. In any case, for scholarly purposes, a re-creative translation can never substitute for the original.

The translator's purpose may be to explain and interpret a work—using the occasion of rendering it into a second language for much the same task
that would be served by a commentary in the original language. Such an explanatory translation, if cautiously done, will stay fairly close to the text, but it almost necessarily changes the mood of the work, since words in the second language grow out of different conceptualizations from the words of the original language, and the translated text itself, no matter how many notes accompany it, tends to sway the understanding of the reader. Most of the current ‘serious’ translations of belles-lettres (poetry and literary prose) works seem to fall into the explanatory category of translation, but with nuances of the re-creative. Thus, though an explanatory translation may be exceedingly useful to the scholar, it still cannot dependably replace the original.

The translator’s purpose may be, finally, to reproduce the information carried by the original work, for the purposes of special study by those who cannot read the original language. Such a translation attempts to provide an equivalent communication of the original which readers can then interpret for themselves. For study purposes, the translation has to be maximally precise. Special study through translation is legitimate so long as few even among scholars can master the ever-increasing number of languages in which significant work has been or is being done. Precise study translations are generally most appropriate for scriptures, scientific theses, technical philosophy, chronicles, and secondary scholarly essays, though this sort of translation in fact has its place in many other kinds of material. With ingenuity and, of course, a complete control of what is routine grammatical pattern or idiom and what is personal choice in the original writer, precision can often be combined with great elegance of translation, as has been shown in Islamics studies by H. A. R. Gibb.

For almost all scholarly purposes, re-creative translation is out of place. On the other hand, all scholars have to admit their reliance on translations. In the first place, no scholar can command all the languages now necessary for him to read in, no matter how specialized his own field. But even more important, no one person can grasp all the implications of a work— especially not of a masterpiece—which may be of importance to another reader. The translator must find an equivalent for every personal turn of phrase of the original, however superfluous it may seem, and must leave ambiguities, so far as possible, ambiguous. Such a translation almost necessarily requires a certain number of explicitly technical terms and a few footnotes or square brackets to pinpoint untranslatable implications. (Need it be added that a precise translation in this sense cannot be an overly literal one? Sometimes the most exact rendering of a Persian word or even a phrase may be, in English, a comma or a semicolon.) The crucial test of the success of a precise study translation is that, although the translation is free of the syntax of the original language as such, yet the most natural retranslation of it into the original language will give back the original form, without precisions or omissions.
Unfortunately, our supply of re-creative and explanatory translations is larger than our supply of good precise translations for study. This springs partly from an inclination of some persons to downgrade the importance of translating, and partly from a natural desire of translators to be creative in their own right. But even from the scholar's viewpoint, let alone the lay reader's, the lack of usable translations is a major handicap to serious work and proper understanding.